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MEET OUR
NEIGHBOURS 2

GUIDE FOR YOUTH WORKERS

Using Non-Formal Exercises for Intercultural
Understanding and Acceptance of Diversity

ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME

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Project partners:

- Center for Educational Initiatives (CEI) - Republic of Bulgaria
- Asociația “Tinerii 3D” (The Association of 3D Youngsters) - Romania
- EGECED (Institute for Educational and Youth Studies) - Türkiye
- EMinS-Leskovac - Republic of Serbia
- INNOVA Lab Bitola - Republic of North Macedonia
- The Youth Center of Epirus (YC Epirus) - Republic of Greece

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1

INTRODUCTION



The **Guide for Youth Workers** is created on the bases on the synthesis report of IO1 from the **“Meet Our Neighbors 2”**, project which it gives a real idea of where the problems and conflicts between the participating Balkan countries may come from and thus find a real solution to overcome them.

Section 1 explores the foundational elements of cultural competence, emphasizing the essential roles of tolerance and understanding in creating a harmonious society. Addressing stereotypes and prejudices becomes paramount in dismantling barriers and fostering genuine connections among individuals from varied backgrounds.

Section 2 shifts the focus to the practical aspects of youth work, starting with a thorough exploration of assessing participants' needs. Through methods like needs assessments and exercise selection and adaptation, youth workers gain insights crucial for tailoring interventions that resonate with the unique backgrounds and requirements of their participants.

Non-formal exercises take center stage in **Section 3**, where we explore their design and implementation as powerful tools for building bridges between communities, promoting inclusivity, and cultivating good neighborly relations.

As we proceed in **Section 4**, the guide equips youth workers with the skills necessary for planning and facilitating impactful sessions. Setting clear objectives, designing comprehensive session plans, employing effective facilitation techniques, and addressing challenges are all essential components of creating meaningful and engaging interventions.

The critical aspects of assessing and measuring impact are covered in **Section 5**, emphasizing the importance of evaluating learning outcomes, encouraging self-reflection, and collecting participant feedback. Long-term impact assessment is explored, ensuring that the efforts invested by youth workers contribute to sustainable positive change.

Finally, **Section 6** guides youth workers through the ethical considerations inherent in their roles. Cultural sensitivity takes precedence, as does addressing controversial topics with tact and empathy. These considerations ensure that the interventions not only make a positive impact but also adhere to the highest ethical standards.

By navigating the content of this guide, youth workers will not only enhance their professional capabilities but also become agents of positive change in the diverse and dynamic communities they serve.

1.1. Project Background and Partners

The Balkan Peninsula is an area characterized by a special dynamic of neighborly relations. Different ethnic and religious groups often coexist in a relatively small area. They share common traditions, history, cuisine, folklore, and even everyday problems of a domestic nature. Unfortunately, this same population has repeatedly become the object of policies that incite extreme hatred and tolerate violence and disunity, which have served different political interests.

Countries in the Balkans have a long history of fragmentation and its nations are often marked by prejudices and stereotypes that can also be defined as generalisations about members of a certain social group as a result of natural cognitive reduction. Such labeling is common because as we ascribe various personality traits to others (and consequently to ourselves), others also do the same for us. Group identity is always defined by the relationship towards other groups or group identities; a group that threatens us, our interests or even our survival. The others – often minorities in society – are ‘different, unadjusted, privileged’ and, generally speaking, perceived as intruders (if not even invaders) in relation to the majority population. In times of crisis, they – by their sole existence – may even be portrayed as a threat.

Therefore, one of the tasks of this project is, first, to try to find out the reasons for the emergence of stereotypes in the Balkans, their characteristics, when they arose, whether they exist today. That it is important to understand the circumstances that led to the development of stereotypes so as to prevent possible future conflicts and deterioration of relations between the various ethnic groups in the Balkans. This can only be achieved by actively involving young people in this process because this is the generation that will determine what life will be like tomorrow. It will be achieved through development of set of instruments which will increase enriches their knowledge on the topic of the project, their civic activism, their tolerance, raising their awareness of conflict aspects, overcoming stereotypes and improvement of understanding each other.

The project focuses on young people born and raised in the previous period between the two epochs – the passing of division, differentiation and defamation of the neighbor and the coming – of shared common European values of tolerance, respect, freedom and respect for human rights. Therefore, in this key from a historical and cultural point of view, when the Balkan countries are located “closer” than any political, strategic, economic and other nature, it is very important to join the lasting foundations of future peace and new context in the Balkans.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

- Center for Educational Initiatives (CEI)** is a non-governmental, non-profit association aimed at enhancing innovative educational initiatives and facilitating educational reforms in the Bulgarian educational system. The main objectives of the organization are to encourage co-operation in the field of education on local, regional and European level, to implement new teaching methods, mainly based on ICT, and to enhance co-operation between public institutions, educational and scientific organizations and NGOs at all levels via professional networks and platforms. The expertise of CEI embraces the following spheres: Training of teachers; E-learning education; Promotion of innovative practices; Informational campaigns; Organization of conferences, seminars and workshops; Organization of public discussions and debates; Research and fieldwork. In 2010, Center for Educational Initiatives established a Training center, whose main objective is to train teachers, school principals, university professors and education experts in e-learning skills and digital competencies. The Training center provides variety of methodological courses for ICT-based teaching, ICT-based assessment practices, etc. based on open educational resources as MOODLE. Over 4000 secondary school teachers from more than 150 schools in all the country were trained until now. More than 40 university professors have graduated special programs developed for the Faculty of Slavic Studies and Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".
- Asociația "Tinerii 3D" (The Association of 3D Youngsters)** is an NGO from Craiova, Romania existing as informal group since 2007, registered as an NGO in January 2013. We are a group of young people who is fighting for respecting the rights of the young people in the community, for social integration and support of the youngsters that belong to disadvantaged social groups and also for developing a healthy way of life in 3Directions: education of the mind, culture for soul and sport for the body. Among our objectives you can find promotions of the volunteering work, of the general creativity, of gender equality and non-racist prejudices, of the exploration of national and other countries culture, of organization of sport contests and last but not least, the promotions of the principles of European Union and European citizenship.





3. **EGECED (Institute for Educational and Youth Studies)** is a non-profit association founded by the professionals from education field (teachers, trainers, academicians, managers and supervisors). Members of EGECEDE are part of a network of schools which include general, vocational and special education schools. It is a network of schools. EGECEDE has a broad reach to special education local schools in primary and secondary level and also cooperation with universities. The objectives of EGECEDE are to gather the professionals who work in the area of the education to contribute to the improvement of the quality of education and to introduce modern applications into education system and youth, to contribute to the development of sustainable exchange between educational professionals in Turkey and Europe, to support intercultural dimension for educators and youth. EGECEDE have 60 members and 300 volunteers (teachers, school managers, inspectors, students from high schools and universities).



4. **EMinS-Leskovac** is a non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental organization operating in the social sphere of Serbia from 24.07.2001. Members of the organization are gathered by a shared vision based on individuality, personal freedom, proactivity, innovation and reciprocity, as the fundamental values on which they form a society in which the life prospects of anyone are as large as possible. The key challenges to which the members of the Association give an answer are: 1. To release the potential of an individual in conditions of systemic transition. 2. To build a globally competitive local environment. 3. To build local capacities which provide the benefits of accession negotiations and the country's membership in the EU. The mission of the association is to provide the best support to social actors in the liberation, promotion and realization of the individual's development potential at the local level. The organization is directed towards meeting the need for freedom, competence, connectivity and entertainment. The organization creates value for its users by developing and realizing a set of: a) primary activities - service design, knowledge management, delivery management, evaluation and dissemination and clustering; and b) auxiliary activities - infrastructure, human resources, information and design.



5. **INNOVA LAB** is a non-governmental, non-profit youth organization, actively involved in project development and implementation in the local, national and international non-formal education sphere that directly aims at the personal and professional development of young people. We have a wide range of volunteers, which at main extent are students at University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bitola, R. N. Macedonia (Faculty of Economics, Law Faculty, Faculty of biotechnical sciences and Faculty of information and communication technologies), aged 18 to 30, but we also work with high school students, and with representatives of different ethnic communities.

The mission of the Center is to increase employment opportunities for young people, to create innovative educational and development initiatives, and to encourage creative action. It helps in developing knowledge by organizing workshops and training for acquiring vocational skills and achieving personal development but also it includes young people with fewer opportunities e.g. rural youth, Roma young people, socially disadvantaged young people to participate in youth exchanges, and initiate and run youth initiatives.

INNOVA LAB promotes the development of the youth entrepreneurship and motivates young people especially from rural areas to start their own business or learn about their possibilities. INNOVA LAB also works on the protection and the development of human rights. We encourage young people inclusion in discussion and solving various problems in our community and we cooperate with other similar associations in our country and wider. INNOVA LAB promotes international mobility projects, in order for young people to study and work abroad, with the aim of enhancing the professional and linguistic skills and promoting greater integration into the global job market.

6. **The Youth Center of Epirus (YC Epirus)** is a non-profit organisation located in Ioannina, in the heart of the Epirus region, Greece. It hosts departments of young adult non-formal education and asylum seeker integration. The organisation is internationally certified for Support Services for the Improvement of Citizen's Lives and the Upgrading of General Living Conditions, by the International Organization for Standardization and has received Certification as a provider of Primary Social Care services of a non-profit nature from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

The young adult center in Kaplani 10, Ioannina is open to public during every study year. The center is an open space for all young adults who look for non-formal education, local and international opportunities. YC Epirus offers activities related to volunteerism, non-formal education, social inclusion and cultural awareness. Our international team combined of volunteers and youth workers implement various courses and workshops, informative and cultural events for youth and young adults; everyone is welcome to join our team and share their ideas!

YC Epirus organizes and participates also in international educational projects such as youth exchanges, training courses, seminars, as well as voluntarism, research and capacity building projects under the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

1.2. Purpose of the Guide (Methodology)

The purpose of the guide is to empower youth workers engaged with young people aged 15 to 29 from diverse societal backgrounds in fostering intercultural understanding and acceptance of diversity. It serves as a comprehensive resource, offering practical strategies, cultural competence training, and innovative approaches to address the unique challenges and opportunities within this demographic. The guide aims to equip youth workers with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to counter stereotypes and prejudices, create inclusive spaces, and contribute to the long-term development of sustainable, intercultural aware communities.

The Purpose of the Guide in Long-Term Impact:

The guide, when effectively utilized, serves as a catalyst for long-term impact within the target audience. By equipping youth workers with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to navigate the complexities of intercultural youth work, the guide contributes to sustained positive change in the following ways:

- *Building Sustainable Inclusive Communities:* Youth workers, armed with the insights from the guide, can actively contribute to building sustainable, inclusive communities. Through their initiatives, they foster environments where diversity is celebrated, stereotypes are dismantled, and individuals from different backgrounds feel a sense of belonging.
- *Shaping Positive Social Narratives:* The guide enables youth workers to actively shape positive social narratives. By countering stereotypes and prejudices, they contribute to creating narratives that emphasize unity in diversity, celebrating the richness that diverse perspectives bring to the social fabric.
- *Empowering Young People for Lifelong Learning:* The guide's emphasis on continuous learning and adaptation empowers youth workers to instill a culture of lifelong learning among the young people they engage with. This approach cultivates individuals who are open-minded, curious, and committed to ongoing personal and cultural development.
- *Fostering Intercultural Leaders:* As youth workers implement the strategies outlined in the guide, they play a crucial role in nurturing the next generation of intercultural leaders. Young people exposed to inclusive programs become leaders who champion diversity, inclusion, and social justice in various spheres of life.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of youth work and intercultural initiatives, the guide should emphasize the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation. Youth workers should be encouraged to collect feedback, assess the impact of their programs, and adapt strategies based on evolving community dynamics and the changing needs of the young people they serve.

Through a comprehensive approach that encompasses cultural competence, practical strategies, technology integration, and continuous learning, the guide serves as a roadmap for youth workers committed to fostering intercultural understanding and diversity acceptance.

As these youth workers navigate the complex landscape of their roles, the guide becomes not only a resource but a catalyst for positive change, shaping inclusive communities and empowering young people to thrive in an interconnected and diverse world.

1.3. Target Audience



In crafting a comprehensive guide for youth workers aimed at fostering intercultural understanding and acceptance of diversity, it is imperative to delve into the understanding of the target audience. This guide is specifically designed to empower youth workers who are actively engaged with young people between the ages of 15 and 29, spanning diverse societal backgrounds.

As these youth workers navigate the complex landscape of intercultural interactions and work towards breaking down barriers, it becomes essential to tailor the guide to address their challenges and opportunities. The target groups directly involved in the project activities are youth workers and youth from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia and Turkey. The target audience of this guide comprises youth workers who play a vital role in shaping the experiences and perspectives of young people aged 15 to 29. These youth workers themselves come from diverse backgrounds, reflecting the multicultural fabric of the communities they serve. Recognizing the demographic diversity within this group is crucial, as it directly influen-

-ces the effectiveness of intercultural programs and initiatives. In the preparation of this Guide are directly included 30 youth workers (5 from every partner country). 60 young people are directly included in the project activities or 10 from each partner country.

Through various dissemination activities, the project results are shared with all youth NGOs in the partner countries. Expected numbers of the reached target group (youth workers and NGOs representatives) through dissemination activities are 180 in total or minimum 30 per country. The results are expected to reach indirectly to 900 young people in total or minimum 150 per country.

Understanding the challenges faced by youth workers is integral to tailoring the guide to their specific needs. The nature of their work involves navigating a multitude of complexities that arise from working with young people from different societal backgrounds.

In multicultural settings, language barriers can pose a significant challenge. Youth workers need strategies for effective communication, recognizing that language proficiency varies among the young people they engage with. Additionally, they must address potential misunderstandings that may arise due to linguistic differences.

Cultural sensitivities demand a nuanced approach from youth workers. They must be aware of cultural norms, taboos, and etiquette to create inclusive environments. Cultural misunderstandings can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes or lead to exclusion, emphasizing the need for cultural competence in youth work.

While challenges exist, the target audience also presents a wealth of opportunities for impactful youth work. Understanding these opportunities is vital for developing strategies that harness the potential for positive change and growth.

Harnessing Technological Connectivity: The 15-29 age group is often characterized by a high degree of technological proficiency and connectivity. Youth workers can leverage digital platforms, social media, and online resources to facilitate intercultural exchange, disseminate information, and create virtual communities that transcend geographical boundaries.

Youth as Agents of Change: Young people within this age range are at a stage where they are increasingly empowered to be agents of change. Youth workers can capitalize on their enthusiasm, passion, and idealism to drive initiatives that challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and contribute to positive social transformation.

1.4. Cultural Competence and Its Relevance

As youth workers, understanding cultural competence and its significance is crucial in the continually evolving landscape of cultural diversity. The youth workers need to acquire the knowledge and skills required to promote cultural competence, enabling them to effectively interact and collaborate with a diverse youth population.

“Complete cultural competence can never be fully attained; rather it is a lifelong process of learning, growing and changing”

Eleanor W. Lynch & Marci J. Hanson

Cultural competence, the ability to engage in ethical and effective cross-cultural interactions in both personal and professional contexts, is an essential skill in our interconnected world. It requires understanding one's own cultural values and perspective and understanding how they are connected to making thoughtful, careful, and rational decisions. It also involves the ability to work with others in cross-cultural contexts.

Fostering cultural competence enables us to understand, communicate with, and engage effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. It equips us with the skill to assess and comprehend distinctions between various cultures and our own. Implicitly, our individual cultural perspectives influence how we interpret any given scenario. It's crucial to note that while culture is a factor in interpreting situations, it doesn't solely dictate one's perspective; personal history and personality also significantly contribute to this process. (Windon, S. and Lamo, T. 2013)

Youth workers who possess cultural competence comprehend, communicate with, and interact effectively with individuals from diverse cultures. The foundations of cultural competence rest on principles such as trust, respect for diversity, equity, fairness, and social justice. Cultural competence involves ([Livingstone, R., 2014](#)):

- Recognizing one's own perspective on the world.
- Cultivating positive attitudes towards cultural distinctions.

- Acquiring knowledge about various cultural practices and perspectives.
- Developing communication and interaction skills that extend across cultures.

The three components of cultural competence encompass attitudes, skills, and knowledge, each essential at three distinct levels (Livingstone, R., 2014):

1. **Individual Level:** Involves the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals.
2. **Service Level:** Encompasses management and operational frameworks, practices, expectations, including policies, procedures, vision statements, and the perspectives of youth, families, and the community.
3. **Broader System Level:** Focuses on how services connect with and show respect for the broader community, agencies, and local communities' protocols.

Identifying culturally competent youth workers doesn't involve a simple checklist, but we can begin to outline the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge. For instance, youth workers demonstrating cultural competence and respect for diversity:

- Possess an understanding of and respect for the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, and child-rearing practices.
- Value the diverse capacities and abilities of youth.
- Show respect for differences in families' home lives.
- Acknowledge that diversity enriches society and contributes to a valid evidence base on ways of knowing.
- Display an ongoing commitment to developing their cultural competence in collaboration with families and communities.
- Teach, model, and encourage cultural competence in youth, recognizing its importance in fostering a strong cultural identity and a sense of belonging.
- Engage in continuous reflection on their cultural competence and its role in building youth's cultural competence.

Building cultural competence is essential for promoting positive interactions in different countries. Each country presents a unique cultural tapestry that demands understanding and respect. Embracing this diversity enhances collaboration, facilitates effective communication, and builds bridges across cultures. By promoting cultural competence, individuals and organizations can navigate the complexities of the countries with sensitivity and appreciation for their rich heritage.

1.5. Tolerance and Understanding

Tolerance, as explained by Bennet, is the expectation for individuals to accept convictions and practices of others, even when there exists strong personal disagreement. Tolerance depends on sound judgment obtained through public debate, and it does not extend to prejudice, which lacks reliable arguments. The author emphasized the need for reasoned disagreement, refraining from prejudice, and the importance of education and dialogue in promoting a more tolerant society.

In a world crowded with differences in race, religion, ethnicity, and belief systems, tolerance becomes paramount, fostering an environment where diversity is not perceived as a threat but as a source of strength.

Moving beyond tolerance, **intercultural understanding** encourages individuals to actively engage with diverse cultures. This involves seeking knowledge about customs, traditions, heritage, history, technology and the values that are reflected in our conversations and relationships that shape different communities. The work of UNESCO (2010) highlights the evolving need for fostering intercultural understanding and affirming one's cultural identity, particularly in the context of contemporary cultural diversity. While in the past, learners may have been surrounded by a consistent cultural environment, today's children encounter a constant exposure to diverse cultures through various channels, necessitating a shift in education towards intercultural understanding. Intercultural understanding is key to dismantling barriers and nurturing a sense of shared humanity.

The UNESCO (2010, p.12-13) report from 1996 introduced four pillars of learning as the fundamental basis for education. These pillars are considered the foundation for nurturing lifelong learning and unlocking the full potential of individuals, fostering both personal development and societal engagement with an emphasis on sustainable human development. The four interconnected pillars, each deserving equal attention in education, are as follows:

1.Learning to Know: This pillar encompasses the pleasure of learning, independent learning skills, and the effective use of ICT, while education for intercultural understanding entails acquiring knowledge about different cultures, comparing diverse thought processes, and fostering thoughtful understanding.

2. Learning to Do: The second pillar underscores the practical application of knowledge. It encourages individuals to develop skills and competencies, translating theoretical knowledge into practical actions, with a particular emphasis on putting values into action and cultivating positive behaviors and collaborative relationships, especially in a multicultural context.

3. Learning to Be: encompasses the transformative journey of becoming culturally aware, fostering positive values and attitudes, and developing the courage and commitment to uphold these values, emphasizing the essential foundation of self-awareness for understanding others, while acknowledging the reciprocal interaction between “learning to be” and “learning to live together.”

4. Learning to Live Together: Often associated with education for intercultural understanding, this pillar highlights the importance of developing social skills, fostering a sense of community, and promoting collaboration for sustainable human development. It involves developing understanding, consideration, and respect for others, including their beliefs, values, and cultures, with the aim of preventing conflicts, resolving them peacefully, and fostering peaceful coexistence, while also viewing difference and diversity positively as opportunities and valuable resources for the common good rather than as threats.

While "learning to live together" is frequently linked with intercultural understanding, the report emphasizes that all four pillars are essential. They work in tandem to create a complete educational framework that addresses the multifaceted aspects of individual growth and societal cohesion.

Tolerance and intercultural understanding are guiding principles towards future where diversity is celebrated, strengthening the fundamentals of a global society where respect, empathy, and cooperation are valued.

1.6. Countering Stereotypes and Prejudices

“Ethnic prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group as a whole, or toward an individual because he is a member of that group” (Allport 1954:9).

In the realm of youth work projects aimed at fostering intercultural understanding and promoting diversity acceptance, countering stereotypes and prejudices emerges as a crucial and challenging aspect. The dynamics of contemporary societies often give rise to preconceived notions about different cultural, ethnic, or social groups. Youth workers, therefore, play a pivotal role in developing initiatives that dismantle these stereotypes and prejudices, paving the way for a more inclusive and harmonious community.

Understanding Stereotypes and Prejudices: Before delving into strategies for countering stereotypes and prejudices, it's essential to grasp the nature and impact of these phenomena. Stereotypes are generalizations about the personal attributes or characteristics of a group of people (Allport 1954). They are beliefs about a particular group of people, often based on assumptions or limited information.

Societal stereotypes exist about a broad range of social groups and can vary by context or situation. Many stereotypes have a long history and were created as a result of specific economic, political, or social circumstances. Stereotyping is a cognitive process in that it involves associating a characteristic with a group, but it can also involve, lead to, or serve to justify an affective reaction toward people from other groups (Allport, 1954; Link and Phelan, 2001).

Prejudice, on the other hand, involves preconceived opinions or attitudes formed without adequate knowledge or understanding, simply based on that person's membership to a particular group. For example, people can be prejudiced against someone else of a different ethnicity, gender, or religion.

Common features of prejudice include (Crawford JT, Brandt MJ, 2019):

- Negative feelings;
- Stereotyped beliefs;
- A tendency to discriminate against members of a group.

This has a very strong influence on how people behave and interact with those who are different from them. At a basic level, it can stifle a prejudiced person's ability to learn more about those who are different from themselves. As a result, it can also cause them to miss out on relationships or conversations that have the potential to be deeply fulfilling.

RECOGNIZING AND CORRECTING YOUR PREJUDICES

When you realize that you are per-judging someone else, try asking yourself the following questions:

Why am I having this thought?

What proof do I have that my judgement about this particular person or group is correct?

What don't I know about this person or group?

Is it possible that I could be biased?

Source: <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-prejudice-5092657>

In the context of intercultural relations, stereotypes and prejudices can lead to discrimination, bias, and exclusion. These negative perceptions hinder the development of genuine connections between individuals from diverse backgrounds and contribute to the perpetuation of social inequalities. Youth workers engaged in projects focused on intercultural understanding recognize the urgency of addressing these issues to create environments where acceptance and collaboration thrive.

Challenges and Realities: Countering stereotypes and prejudices is a complex task, as these ingrained beliefs are often deeply rooted in societal structures and historical narratives. Youth workers encounter various challenges, including resistance to change, fear of the unknown, and systemic inequalities. Additionally, the omnipresence of stereotypes in media, education, and everyday interactions further complicates the task at hand.

In the context of youth work projects, acknowledging these challenges is crucial. By recognizing the complexities associated with countering stereotypes and prejudices, youth workers can tailor their approaches to be both nuanced and effective. Role-playing and perspective-taking are probably some of the earliest intervention techniques to be employed by education professionals (Aboud and Levy, 2000).

Strategies for Youth Workers for Countering Stereotypes and Prejudices:

1. Education and Awareness:

- *Educational Workshops:* Design and implement workshops that provide accurate information about different cultures, traditions, and histories. By fostering a deeper understanding of various communities, participants can challenge existing stereotypes.
- *Media Literacy Programs:* Equip young people with the skills to critically analyze media representations. By deconstructing stereotypes perpetuated in the media, youth can become more discerning consumers and creators of content.
- *Incorporating Cultural Competence in Formal Education:* Collaborate with formal educational institutions to integrate cultural competence into the curriculum. This ensures a sustained and systematic approach to countering stereotypes from an early age.

2. Personal Narratives and Humanizing Experiences:

- *Storytelling Sessions:* Encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to share their personal narratives. Real-life stories humanize communities, breaking down stereotypes and fostering empathy.
- *Community Storytelling Projects:* Initiate community-based projects where individuals collaboratively create narratives that reflect the diversity within their community. These projects serve as powerful tools for challenging stereotypes and building a shared narrative of unity.

3. Interactive Activities and Games:

- *Simulations:* Organize simulations that challenge stereotypes and prejudices. These activities allow participants to step into the shoes of others, promoting empathy and dismantling unfounded beliefs.
- *Interactive Theater:* Utilize interactive theater techniques to engage participants in exploring and challenging stereotypes. The immersive nature of this approach allows for deep emotional connections and understanding.

4. Critical Reflection:

- *Guided Discussions:* Create a safe space for open and honest discussions about stereotypes and prejudices. Guided discussions encourage critical reflection and the examination of personal biases.

- *Facilitating Reflective Workshops:* Design workshops specifically focused on self-reflection and introspection. Through guided activities, participants can explore their own biases and preconceptions, fostering personal growth and awareness.

5. Collaboration with Community Leaders:

- *Community Involvement:* Engage community leaders and influencers in the project. Their support can amplify the impact of initiatives aimed at countering stereotypes and prejudices within the broader community.
- *Leadership Training Programs:* Develop leadership training programs that specifically address countering stereotypes. Empower community leaders with the skills to promote inclusivity and challenge discriminatory practices.

6. Partnerships and Networking:

- *Collaboration with NGOs:* Form partnerships with non-governmental organizations that specialize in combating stereotypes and prejudices. Pooling resources and expertise can result in more comprehensive and impactful initiatives.
- *International Collaborations:* Foster collaborations with organizations on an international scale. Exchanging ideas and best practices with global partners enriches the project and brings a broader perspective to countering stereotypes.

7. Technology and Social Media Initiatives:

- *Online Campaigns:* Leverage the power of social media to launch campaigns challenging stereotypes. Engage a diverse group of influencers and advocates to amplify the message.
- *Virtual Reality Experiences:* Explore the use of virtual reality to create immersive experiences that challenge stereotypes. This innovative approach allows participants to virtually step into different cultural contexts, fostering empathy and understanding.

Measuring Impact: Effectively countering stereotypes and prejudices requires a commitment to ongoing evaluation and assessment. Youth workers should implement mechanisms to measure the impact of their initiatives. This can include pre- and post-program surveys, qualitative interviews, and long-term tracking of participants' attitudes and behaviors. The goal is not only to quantify success but also to adapt strategies based on real-time feedback and evolving societal dynamics.

Long-Term Strategies: To ensure lasting change, youth workers should consider the integration of long-term strategies within their projects:

- *Train-the-Trainer Programs:* Establish programs that train local community members to become advocates for countering stereotypes. This approach creates a sustainable model where community members take on active roles in challenging stereotypes.
- *Policy Advocacy:* Engage in advocacy efforts to influence policies that address systemic issues contributing to stereotypes and prejudices. Collaborate with policymakers to implement inclusive practices in education, media, and other influential spheres.

In the context of youth work projects focused on intercultural understanding and diversity acceptance, countering stereotypes and prejudices is not merely an added component—it is a foundational necessity. By adopting multifaceted strategies that encompass education, personal narratives, interactive activities, collaboration, critical reflection, technology integration, and long-term planning, youth workers can actively contribute to dismantling harmful beliefs and fostering a more inclusive society.

The impact of such initiatives extends beyond individual attitudes, creating ripple effects that contribute to the development of communities characterized by unity, tolerance, and genuine appreciation for diversity. Through persistent and thoughtful efforts, youth workers become catalysts for positive change, paving the way for a future where stereotypes and prejudices hold no power over the potential for harmonious coexistence.



2

**ASSESSING
PARTICIPANTS' NEEDS**



2. ASSESSING PARTICIPANTS' NEEDS

To foster mutual understanding and embrace diversity among the youth, the initial step involves undertaking a comprehensive assessment of participants' needs. This initial phase acts as the foundational basis for tailoring interventions aimed not only at addressing specific challenges but also at fostering purposeful learning experiences.

2.1. Conducting Needs Assessments

According to Petersen and Alexander (2001, p. 4), the primary goal of **needs assessment** is to recognize and subsequently address identified needs. Kaufman and English (1979, p. 31) defined needs assessment as a tool proficient in identifying valid and practical problems while maintaining both philosophical and practical soundness. This methodological approach acts as a safeguard against the pursuit of ineffective educational directions, thereby conserving valuable time, resources, and manpower in potentially futile endeavors. Essentially, these descriptions suggest that needs assessments play a crucial role in identifying and resolving meaningful challenges, aligning with both philosophical principles and practical effectiveness.

Recognizing the unique needs of participants is a crucial prerequisite for developing effective intercultural and diversity-focused programs. The process of conducting needs assessments is a comprehensive exploration that employs various methodologies, including surveys, interviews, and observations. Through these approaches, the participants' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and areas where they feel growth is necessary become apparent. This initial phase acts as a guiding compass, directing youth workers to tailor interventions precisely to the specific needs and aspirations of the group.

Primary Methodologies:

Surveys and Interviews: Engage participants actively by utilizing surveys and interviews to gather insights into their cultural backgrounds, experiences, and areas where they identify a need for improvement.

Surveys are a widely favored method in needs assessments due to their efficiency in obtaining significant quantitative data. However, their apparent convenience masks inherent complexities, rendering them one of the most frequently misapplied data collection methods. Challenges also arise in interpreting and reporting survey results. Despite these issues, surveys can be appropriately and effectively utilized in needs assessments. They offer a cost-effective means to gather information from a large number of individuals, often with minimal assistance to respondents. This efficiency in administration to a broad audience enhances the likelihood of representative results compared to other methods. Surveys are particularly adept at quantifying responses such as attitudes, perceptions, and service needs, mainly due to their reliance on fixed-choice questions. Various survey methods exist, including mail-out surveys (questionnaires), telephone surveys, and face-to-face surveys. Structured or semi-structured questionnaires are typically used, especially with larger samples, as fixed-choice questions allow for swift tabulation. Quantitative results from surveys are often preferred by funders and external stakeholders as they provide an objectively measured quantity of the attribute of interest, facilitating comparisons across different areas or time frames. The scope, content, and methodological considerations, including sampling requirements, should be carefully determined in collaboration with sponsoring organizations and stakeholders before undertaking a needs assessment using survey methods. As a preliminary step, defining the issues the assessment will address is essential. Surveys may adopt various interview methods, such as structured, semi-structured, open-ended, or unstructured, with structured questions being favored for quantitatively focused surveys. The selection of question formats, whether open or fixed-choice, and the importance of pretesting questions on a small sample to ensure consistent understanding and interpretation by respondents are critical considerations in the survey design process. Once the type and number of questions are determined, careful attention to sample selection and size is paramount (Soriano, 2013, p. 79-81).

Observation: Observe interactions within the group to identify potential areas of tension or misunderstanding related to cultural diversity.

The term 'observation' is employed in a broad sense here, encompassing any investigative method aimed at reflecting or assessing the state of things, recognizing variations in how techniques categorize and quantify phenomena, among other key attributes. Information gathering is not a straightforward, sequential process starting from deciding what to observe, then observing, and finally recording data. In needs assessment, information gathering often evolves incrementally, initially employing more general and open observation

techniques and gradually progressing to those with a narrower focus and greater specificity. The process of gathering information is tailored to address general needs assessment questions, with data from observations used iteratively to refine subsequent inquiries. This iterative cycle is influenced by the initial breadth of needs assessment questions and the level of specificity required for effectively utilizing the results (Stufflebeam 1985, p. 83-84).

Cultural Profiling: Develop profiles of participants that include cultural preferences, communication styles, and expectations, helping customize exercises accordingly.

In the broader context of conducting needs assessments, recognizing the importance of cultural profiling emerges as a crucial aspect of strategically planning and executing a comprehensive evaluation. It becomes evident that a thorough understanding of the specific characteristics inherent in the population is essential. The creation of a detailed sociocultural and demographic profile tailored to the targeted geographic area takes on paramount significance. This process involves cultivating a nuanced understanding of the inherent diversities among participants, encompassing variations in culture, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

The development of a cultural profile serves to facilitate a more nuanced approach to needs assessments, acknowledging the intricate fabric of the community. Esteeming and recognizing these differences form the foundational principles for conducting assessments finely attuned to the unique needs and perspectives of each subgroup within the population. By meticulously considering the potential implications of cultural, demographic, and sociological disparities, the needs assessment process can be personalized to ensure inclusivity, relevance, and effectiveness. Cultural profiling not only enhances the depth of understanding but also establishes the groundwork for a more enlightened and equitable needs assessment process, authentically reflecting the diverse composition of the scrutinized community (Barbazette 2006, p. 92-94).

2.2. Exercise Selection and Adaptation

Guided by the profound insights gained from the meticulous needs assessment, the narrative seamlessly advances into the crucial phase of selecting and adapting exercises that align with the identified challenges. This transformative process goes beyond mere pragmatism; it embodies a purposeful art form shaped by the comprehensive principles outlined in this section. The central focus revolves around the trinity of relevance, cultural sensitivity, and adaptability, forming the bedrock of a strategy that guarantees each chosen activity serves as a poignant response to the identified needs. This approach ultimately fosters an environment that is not only inclusive but also supportive.

The criterion of relevance assumes a central role, prompting youth workers to critically assess chosen exercises against the backdrop of identified challenges. An exercise is more than just an activity; it is a tailored solution, a purposeful choice crafted to address a specific aspect of the participants' needs. The meticulous curation of activities ensures they resonate with the experiences and aspirations of the participants, transforming each exercise into a meaningful opportunity for growth and understanding.

Cultural sensitivity, the second pillar of this strategic approach, emerges as a profound acknowledgment of the diversity inherent within the participant group. Exercises are not designed with a one-size-fits-all mentality; rather, they are meticulously crafted to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives. The significance of cultural nuances would encourage youth workers to incorporate elements into exercises that reflect the varied backgrounds and beliefs of the participants. By doing so, each activity transforms into a bridge that connects individuals across cultural boundaries, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Adaptability, the final tenet, acknowledges the dynamic nature of the intercultural landscape. The ability to adjust exercises in response to evolving dynamics and unforeseen challenges becomes a hallmark of effective program development. This would encourage youth workers to be prepared to pivot based on the real-time needs of the group. It recognizes that each participant brings a unique set of circumstances, and exercises must be malleable to accommodate these diversities. The result is an environment that not only meets participants where they are but also evolves with them on their journey towards intercultural understanding.

Guidelines:

Relevance: Ensure exercises directly address the identified needs and challenges revealed during the needs assessment.

When examining the intricacies of exercise selection and adaptation in conjunction with needs assessments, a nuanced analysis becomes imperative. Firstly, discern whether the needs assessment at hand is marked by complexity or simplicity, elucidating the defining traits contributing to its classification. Consider the potential advantages and drawbacks associated with transitioning between these levels, taking into account factors such as time, personnel involvement, and resource allocation. Second, delineate the entities or individuals necessitating the needs assessment, articulate the rationale underscoring its perceived necessity, and expound on the significance attributed to the ensuing findings, along with an evaluation of their anticipated utilization. Third, identify potential limitations intrinsic to the various types of needs assessments, scrutinizing aspects like the validity and reliability of self-perceived judgments by respondents. Finally, for each instance of needs assessments outlined, delve into the ideological or conceptual theories and assumptions underpinning the assessment, pinpoint the relevant literature requiring review at the outset, and forecast the types of services likely to be recommended based on the outcomes of the needs assessment (Soriano 2013, p. 18).

Cultural Sensitivity: Modify exercises to respect and integrate diverse cultural perspectives, ensuring inclusivity.

The skill of assessing participants' needs is fundamental in the roles of supervisors and trainers, constituting a proficiency that necessitates intentional cultivation rather than facile acquisition. The development of this proficiency evolves over time, influenced by one's life experiences and commitment to embracing diversity. In most cases, individuals must consciously express a desire, intention, and active effort to foster and enhance their ability to assess participants' needs effectively. This progression seldom occurs passively or by chance. To refine the process of assessing participants' needs, there is a need to purposefully broaden our perspectives, emphasizing a deeper appreciation and concentration on the nuances of cultural sensitivity. The selection and adaptation of exercises in addressing participants' needs should be approached as a deliberate educational process, employing proactive, purposeful, and intentional strategies. These strategies should be rooted in cultural sensitivity, ensuring that the exercises selected align with diverse backgrounds and aspirations, fostering an inclusive and effective learning environment (Hardy & Bobes 2016, p. 14).

Flexibility: Be prepared to adapt exercises based on the evolving dynamics of the group and unforeseen challenges.

Managing the needs assessment process is essential to prepare a guide for youth workers with the objective of using non-formal exercises for intercultural understanding and acceptance of diversity. Most needs assessments are not implemented exactly as they are proposed and must be modified to allow for flexibility (Sleezer & Gupta 2014, p. 212).

2.3. Types of Non-Formal Exercises

The essence of diversity in approach emerges as a pivotal factor in captivatedly involving participants and fostering genuine intercultural understanding. Within this section, a rich spectrum of non-formal exercises is unveiled, constituting a vibrant array ranging from simulation games to cultural exchanges and problem-solving workshops.

Examples:

- *Games:* Simulations, ice-breaking activities, and role-playing exercises simulating real-world intercultural scenarios. In this context, the term "game" encapsulates a collective endeavor strategically devised to foster team spirit and unity in pursuit of a predetermined objective. Often contrived, such as engaging in a simulated desert expedition, this pedagogical method offers an immersive platform for participants to exhibit and refine their business and interpersonal skills. Games prove effective for team-building and personal development because the emphasis lies more on the process than the ultimate goal. It is through the decision-making, collaboration, communication, and the generation of trust and understanding that participants benefit. Games often involve teams in friendly competition.
- *Icebreaker,* usually of short duration, serves as an activity crafted to alleviate initial apprehension in a training session and/or familiarize participants with each other. An icebreaker can be a light-hearted activity or linked to specific topics or training objectives. While valuable in its own right, the icebreaker becomes particularly beneficial in situations where there is tension or resistance within a group.

- *Role play* involves individuals taking on specific roles within a given scenario, such as a customer service representative in an exchange with an upset customer. After the role is enacted, the approach to the role is discussed, and constructive feedback is provided. The role play may be repeated with different approaches or adjustments based on received feedback. Essentially, role playing is an impromptu interaction that elicits realistic behavior within controlled (and secure) conditions.
- *Simulation*, on the other hand, is a methodology employed to comprehend the interconnections of components within a system or process. Simulations, distinct from games, utilize a model that represents or mirrors certain aspects of reality, if not necessarily in content. Learning occurs through the study of the effects of changes on one or more factors of the model. Simulations are commonly utilized to test hypotheses regarding system dynamics, often termed as "what if?" analysis, or to explore best-case/worst-case scenarios (Barbazette 2006, p. 185-186).

Cultural Exchange: Facilitate structured exchanges where participants share aspects of their culture, fostering mutual understanding. Cultural Exchange serves as a dynamic platform for facilitating structured interactions among participants, providing an opportunity for the sharing of diverse cultural aspects. This intentional and organized exchange creates a space for individuals to openly discuss and showcase elements of their unique backgrounds, traditions, and customs. The primary goal is to foster mutual understanding among participants, encouraging them to explore and appreciate the rich tapestry of cultural diversity within the group. Through this exchange, participants not only gain insights into each other's values, beliefs, and practices but also develop a heightened sense of cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Problem - Solving Workshops: Collaborative exercises facilitating intercultural teamwork. Problem-Solving Workshops are collaborative and engaging exercises designed to challenge participants to collectively address intercultural complexities. In these workshops, scenarios or challenges are presented, necessitating participants to navigate and resolve issues arising from cultural differences. The emphasis lies in fostering teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills within a multicultural context. Participants are encouraged to pool their diverse perspectives, drawing upon their cultural backgrounds to devise innovative solutions. These workshops go beyond theoretical discussions, providing a hands-on, interactive experience simulating real-world intercultural challenges. By working together to overcome these challenges, participants not only enhance their problem-solving

capabilities but also develop a deeper understanding and appreciation for diverse approaches to addressing complex issues within a multicultural setting. Overall, Problem-Solving Workshops serve as a practical and transformative avenue for building essential skills and promoting effective collaboration in intercultural environments.

2.4. Collecting Participant Feedback

Through surveys and reflection sessions, youth workers can gauge the impact of the exercises and the overall program structure. This continuous feedback loop ensures that the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of the participants, allowing for ongoing refinement and improvement.

Feedback serves as the conduit for conveying the information and data amassed during the needs assessment process, with subsequent interpretation leading to the formulation of recommendations integrated into the overarching training plan. In the realm of Basic Needs Assessment Competency, proficiency lies in orchestrating a Feedback Meeting for Data Interpretation. This involves parsing survey data and presenting recommendations to trainers, underpinned by awareness of pre-survey opinions, adept data analysis, and a willingness to justify interpretations. On a more advanced level, Advanced Needs Assessment Competency involves steering a comprehensive feedback meeting with training program supervisors to decipher survey data. This advanced competency encompasses a nuanced understanding of feedback meeting dynamics, statistical survey techniques, and a commitment to fostering group consensus, ensuring that recommendations are not only data-driven but also aligned with broader educational needs. The advanced practitioner is characterized by a willingness to explore alternative data interpretations and a determination to facilitate consensus decision-making within the group, avoiding the imposition of choices on its members.

Feedback Mechanisms:

Surveys: Utilize anonymous surveys to gather feedback on the effectiveness of exercises and the overall program.

Employing surveys strategically is a methodical approach to collect honest feedback on the effectiveness of exercises and the overarching program. The use of anonymous surveys provides participants with a confidential platform to express their opinions and insights without fear of judgment.

These surveys serve as invaluable tools for assessing the impact of specific exercises, identifying areas of strength, and pinpointing aspects that may require refinement. Ensuring anonymity increases the likelihood of participants providing open and honest feedback, offering a comprehensive understanding of their experiences.

Survey results become a valuable resource for program evaluation, enabling youth workers to make informed decisions, implement targeted improvements, and tailor future exercises to better meet the diverse needs and preferences of the participants. In essence, surveys act as a dynamic feedback mechanism, fostering a continuous cycle of assessment, refinement, and enhancement within the youth program.

Reflection Sessions: Incorporate regular reflection sessions to encourage open dialogue about participants' experiences and insights gained.

Integrating regular reflection sessions into the program schedule is a deliberate strategy aimed at fostering open dialogue about participants' experiences and insights. These dedicated sessions provide structured opportunities for individuals to reflect collectively and individually on their journey within the program. By encouraging participants to share their thoughts and perspectives, these reflection sessions become invaluable forums for unpacking personal growth, cultural understanding, and the acquisition of new skills. The intentional scheduling of these sessions not only provides a space for participants to articulate their experiences but also promotes a sense of community and shared learning. Through facilitated discussions, participants can explore the nuances of their collective journey, fostering a deeper connection and mutual understanding. Reflection sessions, therefore, emerge as dynamic components that contribute not only to individual development but also to the overall cohesiveness and richness of the program's learning environment.

Adaptation: Act on feedback received, making necessary adjustments to exercises and program structure.

Embracing a proactive approach to continuous improvement, the principle of adaptation involves taking prompt and thoughtful action in response to the feedback received. By actively engaging with the insights and perspectives shared by participants, youth workers can identify areas for enhancement within both individual exercises and the broader program structure.

The iterative nature of this process ensures that the program remains dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs and preferences of the participants. It involves a commitment to making necessary adjustments, whether they refinements to specific exercises, modifications to the overall structure, or the introduction of innovative elements to enhance engagement and learning outcomes.

The ethos of adaptation underscores a commitment to creating a program that is not static but evolves based on real-time feedback, creating an environment that is responsive, participant-centered, and continually refined for optimal impact. Through this adaptive approach, the youth program strives for ongoing excellence, ensuring that it remains relevant, effective, and attuned to the diverse needs of its participants.





3

**DESIGNING EFFECTIVE
NON-FORMAL EXERCISE**



3. DESIGNING EFFECTIVE NON-FORMAL EXERCISES

In the dynamic landscape of youth work, particularly in the culturally rich and diverse Balkans, the role of non-formal education is pivotal. This chapter, rooted in the ethos of intercultural understanding and acceptance of diversity, seeks to guide youth workers through the nuances of designing effective non-formal exercises. Our aim is not just to inform but to transform, equipping practitioners with the skills necessary to navigate and enrich the intercultural dialogue among young people in the Balkans.

The Balkan region, known for its complex history and rich cultural tapestry, presents unique challenges and opportunities for youth work. In this context, non-formal education emerges as a powerful tool to bridge divides, foster inclusivity, and cultivate a sense of shared community. The exercises and methodologies outlined in this chapter are designed to encourage young people to engage critically and compassionately with the world around them, laying the groundwork for a more empathetic and united European future.

The chapter is structured into six key sub-chapters, each addressing a critical aspect of youth work in the Balkans. From building bridges between communities to promoting good neighborly relations, each section delves into specific pedagogical tools and learning objectives tailored to the unique needs of the region. These sections are not just theoretical frameworks but are grounded in practical, actionable strategies that can be adapted to various contexts within the Balkans.

A significant emphasis is placed on the selection of pedagogical tools. These tools are chosen for their proven effectiveness in engaging youth in meaningful and transformative ways. From role-plays that allow participants to step into others' shoes to interactive discussions that challenge preconceived notions, each tool is selected to resonate with the diverse experiences of Balkan youth.

Furthermore, the chapter addresses the crucial role of trainers and organizers in facilitating these exercises. It outlines the competencies required for trainers, ensuring that they are not only knowledgeable in their respective areas but also skilled in managing the dynamics of diverse groups. The guidelines for training organizers provide a blueprint for creating environments conducive to open, respectful, and fruitful engagements.

Lastly, the chapter delineates the ideal profile of trainees. Recognizing the diversity of the Balkan youth, it highlights the importance of inclusivity in participant selection. The aim is to bring together a mosaic of perspectives, ensuring a rich, multi-faceted dialogue that truly represents the varied tapestry of the Balkans.

In essence, this chapter is more than just a guide; it is a call to action for youth workers in the Balkans to foster environments where young people can explore, understand, and appreciate the diversity around them. By harnessing the power of non-formal education, we aim to equip the youth with the tools to build a future that is rooted in tolerance, empathy, and mutual understanding.

3.1. Building Bridges Between Communities

Principles: Focus on fostering understanding and reconciliation between diverse communities. Emphasize the importance of empathy, active listening, and open dialogue.

Learning Objectives:

- To develop skills in effective communication and empathy.
- To understand and appreciate diverse perspectives and histories.
- To create a platform for shared experiences and cooperative problem-solving.

Pedagogical Tools: Role-playing activities, inter-community dialogue forums, collaborative projects, and story-sharing sessions.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers should have experience in conflict resolution, empathy training, and be skilled in facilitating sensitive discussions.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Secure a neutral and safe space, ensure diverse representation, and provide resources for follow-up actions.

Trainee Profile: Individuals open to dialogue, with a background or interest in community work, and a willingness to challenge personal biases.

3.2. Promoting Inclusivity

Principles: Ensure activities are accessible and engaging for all, regardless of background. Encourage participation, voice, and visibility of all group members.

Learning Objectives:

- To ensure every participant feels valued and heard.
- To cultivate an environment where diversity is celebrated and utilized as a strength.
- To develop inclusive leadership and facilitation skills among youth workers.

Pedagogical Tools: Inclusive team-building exercises, diversity workshops, interactive discussions on inclusivity, and scenario-based activities.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers must be knowledgeable about diversity and inclusion principles and possess skills in managing diverse groups.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Create an inclusive environment, offer accessibility options, and ensure materials are culturally sensitive.

Trainee Profile: Participants should be from diverse backgrounds, open to learning about others, and committed to promoting inclusivity.

3.3. Promoting Good Neighborly Relations

Principles: Highlight the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation among neighboring countries and cultures.

Learning Objectives:

- To foster positive attitudes and behaviors towards neighboring communities.
- To dispel stereotypes and build a foundation for long-term peaceful coexistence.
- To develop strategies for collaborative initiatives and cross-border projects.

Pedagogical Tools: Cross-border collaborative exercises, cultural exchange programs, and workshops on regional history and shared heritage.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers need expertise in regional politics and cultures, with strong diplomatic skills and knowledge of historical contexts.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Encourage representation from different regions, create a schedule that allows for comprehensive cultural exploration, and plan for potential language barriers.

Trainee Profile: Individuals from various Balkan regions, interested in regional cooperation and understanding, and capable of respectful engagement.

3.4. Democracy in Action

Principles: Focus on participatory decision-making, respect for diverse opinions, and active civic engagement.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the principles of democracy and their application in everyday life.
- To empower youth to engage in democratic processes and community leadership.
- To develop critical thinking and debate skills.

Pedagogical Tools: Mock parliaments, debate clubs, civic responsibility workshops, and voting simulations.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers should have a background in political science, civic education, and experience in democratic processes.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Ensure a politically neutral setting, offer resources on democratic principles, and create opportunities for practical application.

Trainee Profile: Youth interested in politics and democracy, with a willingness to engage in debates and a commitment to civic responsibility.

3.5. Civic Education and Active Citizenship

Principles: Emphasize the role of individuals in shaping society, promoting civic responsibility, and community involvement.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society.
- To encourage active participation in community development and civic initiatives.
- To foster a sense of belonging and contribution to the wider European community.

Pedagogical Tools: Community service projects, workshops on civic rights and duties, interactive sessions on social activism, and citizen journalism training.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers must have experience in civic education, community organizing, and social activism.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers must have experience in civic education, community organizing, and social activism.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Provide practical opportunities for civic engagement, facilitate connections with local organizations, and ensure a supportive learning environment.

Trainee Profile: Motivated individuals with an interest in community development, social issues, and a drive for active citizenship.

3.6. The Role of Youth in Shaping Europe

Principles: Encourage forward-thinking and active involvement in European affairs, highlighting the impact of youth on future policies and societal changes.

Learning Objectives:

- To develop an understanding of European integration and its implications for the Balkans.
- To inspire active engagement in European youth programs and initiatives.
- To empower youth as agents of change in their communities and beyond.

Pedagogical Tools: European Union simulation games, workshops on European institutions and policies, youth leadership forums, and Erasmus+ project planning.

Trainer Requirements: Trainers should be knowledgeable about European Union structures, youth policies, and have experience in international youth work.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Highlight opportunities for youth in European programs, facilitate networking, and offer guidance on accessing EU resources.

Trainee Profile: Youth with a keen interest in European affairs, leadership potential, and a vision for their role in shaping the future of Europe.

- **Key learning objectives for promoting inclusivity**

The key learning objectives for promoting inclusivity include:

Ensuring every participant feels valued and heard: This objective focuses on creating an environment where all participants, irrespective of their background, feel that their opinions and contributions are appreciated and taken into consideration.

Cultivating an environment where diversity is celebrated and utilized as a strength: This involves recognizing and valuing the diverse perspectives and experiences that each participant brings. It aims at fostering an appreciation of how these differences contribute positively to the group dynamics and learning experiences.

Developing inclusive leadership and facilitation skills among youth workers: This objective is about equipping youth workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively manage and facilitate diverse groups. It includes training them to be sensitive to the needs of various groups and individuals, ensuring equitable participation, and addressing any biases or prejudices that may arise.

- **Effective methods for teaching active citizenship**

For teaching active citizenship effectively, especially in the context of non-formal education for youth in the Balkans, several pedagogical tools and methods are particularly useful:

Community Service Projects: Involving young people in community service projects helps them understand the impact of their actions on their community. It also develops a sense of responsibility and ownership towards societal issues.

Workshops on Civic Rights and Duties: Conducting interactive workshops that educate youth about their rights and responsibilities as citizens fosters an understanding of the legal and ethical framework within which societies operate.

Interactive Sessions on Social Activism: Interactive sessions that involve discussions, debates, and brainstorming on social activism encourage young people to engage with social issues critically and creatively.

Citizen Journalism Training: Training in citizen journalism, including blogging, and using social media for social change, empowers young people to raise awareness and influence public opinion on issues that matter to them.

Role-Playing and Simulation Exercises: These exercises can be used to simulate civic processes like elections or council meetings, helping participants understand how decisions are made and the importance of participation.

Debate Clubs and Public Speaking Activities: Encouraging young people to participate in debates and public speaking activities helps develop their ability to articulate their thoughts, defend their views, and engage in constructive dialogue.

Engagement with Local Governance: Facilitating opportunities for youth to interact with local governance structures, such as attending council meetings or meeting with local representatives, can provide practical insights into how governance and civic engagement work.

Project Planning and Implementation: Involving youth in planning, executing, and evaluating small projects can teach them about the practical aspects of civic engagement and the importance of planning, teamwork, and accountability.

How can I design an exercise on building bridges between communities?

Designing an exercise on building bridges between communities, particularly in the context of non-formal education in the Balkans, involves creating an activity that fosters understanding, empathy, and dialogue between diverse groups. Here's a step-by-step approach to designing such an exercise, drawing from the principles and objectives outlined in the "Designing Effective Non-Formal Exercises" guide:

Step 1: Define the Exercise's Objectives

Develop Skills in Effective Communication and Empathy: Focus on enhancing participants' ability to listen actively and express themselves in a way that is respectful and empathetic.

Understand and Appreciate Diverse Perspectives and Histories: Encourage participants to learn about and from the diverse backgrounds and experiences of others.

Create a Platform for Shared Experiences and Cooperative Problem-Solving: Aim to provide opportunities for participants to work together on common goals or challenges.

Step 2: Choose Suitable Pedagogical Tools

Role-Playing Activities: Develop scenarios that require participants to assume the roles of individuals from different communities. This can help them understand diverse perspectives and challenges faced by others.

Inter-Community Dialogue Forums: Organize forums where participants from different backgrounds can discuss various topics, share their stories, and address misconceptions.

Collaborative Projects: Engage participants in projects that require cooperation and interaction between different groups, fostering teamwork and mutual understanding.

Story-Sharing Sessions: Create a safe space for participants to share personal stories that reflect their cultural background, experiences, and viewpoints.

Step 3: Trainer and Organizer Guidelines

Trainer Requirements: Ensure trainers are skilled in conflict resolution, empathy training, and facilitating sensitive discussions. They should be adept at managing group dynamics and encouraging inclusive participation.

Training Organizer Guidelines: Organize the exercise in a neutral and safe space, ensure diverse representation among participants, and provide resources for follow-up actions. It's crucial to create an atmosphere of trust and respect.

Step 4: Trainee Profile

Recruit participants who are open to dialogue, have a background or interest in community work, and are willing to challenge personal biases. Diversity in the participant group is key to the success of the exercise.

Step 5: Execution of the Exercise

Introduction: Begin with an ice-breaker to build comfort and connection among participants.

Activities: Conduct the planned role-plays, discussions, and collaborative projects. Facilitate and guide these activities to ensure they align with the learning objectives.

Debriefing: After each activity, hold a debriefing session. Discuss what was learned, challenges faced, and insights gained. Encourage reflection on how these learnings can be applied in real-world situations.

Closing: Conclude with a session summarizing the key takeaways and discussing potential next steps or actions participants can take in their communities.

Step 6: Follow-up

Encourage ongoing engagement and dialogue among participants. This can be facilitated through social media groups, regular meetings, or collaborative projects that extend beyond the initial exercise.

Additional Considerations

Sensitivity to Local Context: Be mindful of the historical and cultural context of the Balkans, tailoring the exercise to be relevant and respectful.

Flexibility: Be prepared to adapt the exercise based on participant feedback and dynamics during the session.



4

**PLANNING AND
FACILITATING
SESSIONS**



4. PLANNING AND FACILITATING SESSIONS

4.1. Setting Objectives

Learning objectives are statements of what learners will know, understand, or be able to do as a result of engaging in the session. Well-defined learning objectives are essential to the session, because the objectives will provide clarity about the purpose of the session, they will guide the development/ choice of the appropriate learning material, methods and overall content, and the learning objectives also will establish accountability between the facilitator and the learner[1].

The session's objectives should be both replying to the needs of the participants and the overall aims of the educational activity, course, project, or other type of activity which the session is part of. In addition, the objectives should be in line with the general objectives of non-formal education. Therefore, there are several integral points that should be considered while setting up the objectives for a session.

Firstly, when addressing the in-advance assessed needs of the learners, the following aspects should be considered when setting the objectives of a session:

- The existing professional and educational background/experiences of the participants.
- The professional development goals of the participants.
- The personal development goals of the participants.

Secondly, the overall aims of the whole activity/ course/ project, etc. should be considered when setting the objectives of a session:

- The objectives of a session should be relevant to the main aims of the activity/course/ project, etc.
- The objectives of a session should be coherent with the objectives of other sessions, in order to have a logical flow and mutual support of the sessions and their objectives throughout the whole educational activity/ course / project, etc.

[1] <https://www.preventconnect.org/2014/12/writing-good-learning-objectives/>

Thirdly, objectives of a session should be built on the quality principles and objectives of non-formal education:

- The objectives of a session should include expertise and/or soft competence development among the learners.
- The objectives should be realistic and achievable given the background and needs of the participants, in accordance with the available time and environment of the session, and supported by the context of the whole educational activity/ course / project, etc.
- The objectives should be measurable, meaning that short and long term impact measurement should indicate whether the objectives of a session were achieved, and to what extent.
- The objectives should be specific and clearly described and structured, both to be well understood by the facilitator and by the learners.
- The objectives should allow space for individual engagement of the learners, and be in line with values associated with human rights.

The above described structure for setting objectives of a session is structured in 3 sections: needs/background of the learners, context of the whole educational activity, and quality standards/objectives of non-formal education. As useful as this structure might be due to it being convenient, there is available a classic mode for setting any objectives (or goals), which is the so-called SMART model [2] (see picture below).



[2] <https://iste.web.unc.edu/activity/is-your-goal-smart-3-12/>

The SMART model, typically used for setting up goals but can be easily adapted for setting up learning objectives, includes most of the aspects described in the previously given structure for setting up learning objectives of a session. Therefore, a slight adjustment of the SMART model for setting up learning objectives of a session should be made, incorporating the relevance to the background and needs of the learners, relevance to the goals of the whole learning activity / course/ project, and, to be in line with other quality standards of non-formal education, such as being in line with human rights values. However, this model visibly is more memorable given it's name and structure, hence, the proposed adapted version of it can come in very handy as an basis/structure for setting up objectives of an educational session.

4.2. Designing a Session Plan

The choice of specific methods of the session and associated aspects should be in an overall correlation with the main objectives of the session and aiming to reach those set objectives.

The methods should be supporting non-formal education principles and quality standards, such as:

- The educational methods should be developed by experienced educators and/or tested, their educational aspect should be defined and visible.
- The methods and content of the session should be in line with the competences of the facilitator, to ensure a qualitative facilitation and achievement of a high potential of the used methods.
- The methods should be adapted to the specific needs of learners – to reply to their learning objectives, and to reply to their physical needs for a productive learning.
- The methods should allow space for flexibility if necessary, according to the individual learners or the group process.
- The methods should be engaging for the participants and promote active participation and learning.
- The methods should include peer or group collaborative learning to promote exchange and interaction.
- The methods should be practical, based upon experimental (learning by doing) approach.

- The methods should be transferable to real life contexts, directly or metaphorically.
- The reflection points should be in line with the possible and even unexpected experiences and learning outcomes of the learners.

A clear and pedagogically appropriate structure of a session is one of the integral aspects of a successful and productive session. The facilitator should always have a clear structure in mind, in order to facilitate the activity properly and be able to support the participants' learning process to the fullest extent possible, of course, according to other factors.

Typically, non-formal educational session should be structured according to the following elements:

- An energy boost or a warmup of the group, typically with the use of a very short (max. 5 minutes) energizer. This element is additional and optional, meant to stimulate the mind and body. This element should be included only when appropriate regarding the following session theme and when the facilitator can feel that the group needs an energy boost, for example, in early morning, after other sessions, or at any moment when the group energy is visibly low
- Introduction of the general session plan to the learners - that can improve the understanding of the planned session flow, reduce anxiety, and build trust between the learners and the facilitator. When appropriate and educationally useful, a surprise element of the practical session part can be kept.
- Experimental and/or practical part of the session - interactive work in pairs or groups where participants can engage with each other and activate their learning process, and/or experience an educational method on which they can further reflect, adjust to their context, and reuse. Many various and unique non-formal education techniques can be used for this part of the session, such as, discussions, debates, research, educational table games, simulation games and exercises, theater, creation of a product or material, use of technology and online tools, artistic methods, visual aid for creative thinking and promotion of a discussion, team guidance, sportive games, sensual experiences, provision of a set of many creative tasks to be completed, and many more. Many toolkit can be used to discover various methods, such as the one created during this project "Meet Our Neighbours 2", many other individual methods and toolkit available on the SALTO website (<https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/>) and on other platforms devoted to non-formal education.

- Reflection on the experimental and/or practical part of the session. Special attention should be given to this element, since often the main learning outcomes are being noticed and shared during this part of the session. Various methods can be used - a plenary debriefing, sharing in groups or pairs, use of creative visual aid to activate reflective thinking, etc. Session appropriate questions should be well formed in advance and give opportunity for everyone to express their feelings and learning outcomes. Due to a likely possibility of unexpected learning moments and feelings, some of the reflection questions could be adapted or additional questions can be added to address the unexpected learning events and moments.
- Educational input (theory on the session theme, connected with learning objectives of the session) could be provided in several moments within the session structure, according to the type of experimental/practical element and type of the planned reflection. It can be given before the experimental/practical part if necessary for that part, but often it is given after the reflection, as a material to be saved by the learners. It can also be created collectively by the participants during an appropriate stage of the session, but it should be noted that it is an input not necessarily including all points of the theoretical content related to the session theme.
- Closure of the session is typically very short and can support the feeling of a completion and a transition to the next session/-s, or a break, or the closure of the day, etc.
- Crucial aspects that should be considered before designing the session plan:
- The session plan should be appropriate to the given time for the session. It is common for the session to take more time than planned due to the group process and needs, and in general any session will work out better if it is not rushed. Therefore, some additional time should be considered in advance
- The environment of the session must be considered - there should be enough space to carry out the planned activity truly comfortably, the conditions of the venue should be comfortable and not limit the active participation of the learners (for example, it should not be too cold, there should be sufficient lighting and fresh air, etc.). Indoors vs outdoors space should be considered as well, according to the most appropriate setting for the specific session and according to the availability of comfortable and safe options.
- Inclusive and active participation of the learners should be promoted by adjusting the session and specific techniques to the specific needs of the learners - their limitations such as disabilities should be considered and addressed by in advance planned necessary modifications of the techniques. That should be done without bringing a specific attention to the limitations any participant might face in order to empower their

- participation and not to bring hard feelings and unnecessary attention on their limitations.
- The session should be designed according to the needed and available materials, such as technical equipment, consumables, accessibility of personal equipment of learners if required, for example, smartphones or personal laptops, etc.
- The session should allow space for some flexibility for the timing and specifics of the session structure, which can be optionally introduced and used according to the group process and notable needs.
- The directions given to the learners during each element of the session should always be clear and concise, and it should be checked upon whether participants understood the directions.
- The importances of reflection - very often, the main learning outcomes are noticed by the participants during the reflection. Therefore, the questions that facilitator gives for reflection are crucial to the learning process, and this part of the session should not be rushed in any way - each participant should be given space and opportunity to express their learning outcomes and feelings
- Due to the valuable aspects of each element of the session, participants should be encouraged to fully participate in the whole session, however, they must be given the right to consent or not to consent to participate in any element of the session. For example, a participants might not feel comfortable to take part in activities that might trigger highly emotional reaction, or that involve touch of other people, or that include taking imagery (photos, videos) of the person, or that are held in other personally uncomfortable manner or environment, which is comfortable for a strong majority or the rest of the group and would not be considered as an exclusive approach. Each person has different personal boundaries, which should be addressed before the session or the whole educational training/ course/ activity, by mentioning that a specific part of the session would include touching of other people or other personal boundary aspects and the learners should be aware that their non-participation due to personal boundaries is welcomed
- Consideration of the diversity of techniques used during the session and the whole educational course/ activity can be important for keeping up the motivation and engagement of the participants. For example, too often use of presentations, or too rare use of movement can decrease the energy levels and attention among the participants.

4.3. Facilitation Techniques

Appropriate and qualitative facilitation techniques should be consciously used by the facilitator during any non-formal education session in order to set the session for success and educational productivity. The use and understanding of the most appropriate aspects of the facilitation techniques and a professional self-awareness come with time and practice, and are especially supported by the facilitator's self and peer reflection on their carried-out sessions and overall competences.

Even though each facilitator develops their own unique facilitation style, the techniques that a facilitator should incorporate in their facilitation approach, and reflect upon, are mentioned in the following points:

- Set up environment and invitation – the facilitator's investment in moments before the session can set the basis for the mood of the session. For example, the facilitator can prepare the learning environment to promote inspirational and positive vibes, for example, by the use of music, lighting, decors and other sensory elements, when appropriate. Furthermore, the ways of welcoming learners to the learning settings can also set a positive and engaging mood for the participants, for example, greeting them and having a small talk with the arriving participants.
- The facilitator should be well aware of the session objectives and the plan (it is suggested for the facilitator to hold notes of the main elements and timing), and hold tools for addressing challenges and emergencies, in order to ensure the best possible flow and management of the session.
- Consideration of a safe and secure learning environment can improve the protection and overall safety of the participants, which can promote their full engagement with the session. For example, addressing the consent of participants, considering that the venue has standard security and safety standards such as fire alarm and extinguisher, protection from outsiders, preventing and addressing any emotional and physical harm during the activity, if any, can improve the participant's wellbeing and participation in the session.
- Clear, concise speech and directions can significantly improve the learners' understanding of the process of the session and promote their active engagement, as well as decrease confusion and participants' detachment from the session's flow and objectives.

- Active listening to the participants, including contact (eye contact, emotional contact and/or relation with a participant), absorption (paying attention to the communicated content coming from a participant), rephrasing (expressing the communicated content in other words, in order to make sure the content was understood correctly), giving a feedback if necessary (can include a valuable comment on the expressed thought), and confirmation (communicate to the participant that their thought was heard, understood, and valued).
- Use of a welcoming, engaging, and positively associated body language can improve the participants active engagement with the session and motivation to take part in all elements of the session. For example, turning away from participants can be off-putting, create an invisible barrier between the facilitator and the learners, and disengage participants. Another example would be the use of an eye contact with the participants - it should not be directed to only one or few participants in order not to create a tension, and it should address all participants in order to keep their attention and welcome their participation and presence. Many other body language elements should be considered, such as arm gestures and tone of the voice, and others.
- The participants should always be addressed in a respectful manner, even during a disagreement, in order to empower them, endure their dignity, and welcome opposing opinions and discussion over those during the session. Even when a potential harm could escalate (emotional, physical) towards other participants, the matter should be addressed in the most respectful manner possible.
- Transparency from the facilitator can support the trust and link between the facilitator and the learners, which can further promote the participants' engagement and learning process. For example, transparency about the learning objectives, the plan of the session, even the failures, possible biases, personal stance or relation to the learning theme, etc. could be shared with the participants.
- Not imposing facilitator's personal stance, beliefs, opinions, etc. to the participants. Everyone has rights on their own beliefs and opinions, and the modification of those. The facilitator's role is supporting the participants' learning process, and not teaching. However, a facilitator should be more assertive in cases when they notice a potential harm being done by any participants towards others or the society (no harm principle), by providing facts and tested theories on the matter.

- Practicing active diversity – the acknowledgment of the overall diversity between the learners (without unnecessary attention to individuals) and invitation to participants to share and give inputs coming from their personal lives, backgrounds, and talents can be encouraging and empowering. As well as addressing intercultural dimension in intercultural learning settings can provide space for exploring the benefits of interculturality that can promote the learning process and specific aspects of it.
- Being present, noticing and addressing the needs of the group or escalating issues can ensure that appropriate action can be taken timely and promote the participants' comfort, and full engagement in the session.
- Re-energizing of the group can be used in a long session where it is notable that participants have lower energy levels and engagement after some time. In order to keep the participants' energy levels higher and re-activate thinking and active participation, the facilitator can introduce a 1-2 minute long energizer in an appropriate moment, around the middle or 2/3 of the session.
- It is strongly suggested that the facilitator (or an assisting facilitator or a participant with this delegated task) would take notes of the session main points, record and save the collective and provided inputs, and materials produced. These recordings can be shared with the participants after the session, so that they could re-visit, review and use these records in the future.

Additional points can be added to the above list, depending on the facilitator's style, needs of the group and in the accordance with the session's learning objectives and the overall goals of the whole course/ activity/ project. Since the facilitator's professional experience and self-awareness are crucial to improving one's competences as a facilitator, various self and peer reflection methods can be used. Commonly used and qualitative reflection method for facilitators (mostly trainers, but can be used by youth workers, too) is the ETS Trainers Competence framework, available on the Appraiser platform (<https://trainersappraisal.com/>). The competence model for trainers is described on the platform, and each individual facilitator can assess their own and other facilitator's competences within this framework, after logging into the platform. The ETS competence model for facilitators consist of these main competences: Facilitating learning process, Cooperating successfully in Teams, Intercultural Competence, Learning to Learn, Designing Educational Programs, Civic Engagement, and Communicating Meaningfully with Others, each of them consisting of many areas and elements that can be assessed[3].

[3] <https://trainersappraisal.com/help/manage-activities/ets-competence-model-for-trainers>

After self-assessing these competences, the facilitator can invite other registered facilitators to assess their competences of any area of interest. The assessment of one's competences as a facilitator can improve not only the conscious use of qualitative facilitation techniques, but can also improve the ability to design educational sessions and deal with challenges.

4.4. Dealing with Challenges

It is common for a facilitator to meet challenges before and during the session, as well as it is possible for participants to meet challenges during the session. Several prevention and action tools can be used to address the potential and existing challenges that either a facilitator or learners can experience. Risk assessment before starting to plan out the session will always come in handy in order to identify the possible challenges that could be predicted. It can be done by listing potential risk factors and evaluating the possibility of it to occur and the level of negative impact it can create. According to the evaluation of each potential risk, the facilitator can prepare for the potential challenges (especially, for the most impactful and possible ones) by choosing tools that can be used for prevention or action. Below are offered some tools for both prevention and taking action in the face of various challenges.

Challenge prevention tools before the session:

- Risk assessment (as described above).
- Following the suggested quality standards of non-formal education.
- Assessing the needs of the learners.
- Qualitative design of the session.
- Use visual aid and other techniques to boost own creativity and inspiration for creating a unique and valuable session.
- Appropriate preparation of the methodology of the session.
- Assessment and preparation of the learning environment/ setting
- Taking security precautions, such as being aware of emergency exits and procedures, knowledge of emergency service phone numbers, security from outsiders and outside elements, preparation of secure materials/items to be used in the session.
- Planning out how to address safety matters with the group of participants and plan a proposal of actions and behavior towards a safe learning environment.
- Assess own competences as a facilitator in order to be able to plan the session in accordance to own competences and to select tools for addressing challenges according to own competences.
- Collect tools that can be used in case of facing a challenge later during the activity.

Challenge prevention tools during the session:

- Safety aspects should be addressed with the whole group of learners, so that everyone has an opportunity to express their needs regarding having a safe environment, and behaviors towards physically and emotionally safe environment can be collectively agreed upon, as well as physically noted and re-visited.
- Specific attention can be given to consent and its forms, expected practical behavior to ensure smooth flow of the session, ways and procedures how to address safety and security issues, safety and security aspects in relation to the national law (which can differ depending on whether the learners are underage or adults).
- Inviting participants to share their possible learning blocks and promote creative thinking on how to address them, both from the side of participants and the facilitator.
- Addressing the possibility of having conflicts of interest and opposing opinions within the group and suggest respectful, dignifying, tolerant behavior.
- Keep track of the timing during the session.
- Use of qualitative facilitation techniques.

Tools to address appearing challenges during the session:

- Address the expressed potential learning blocks of the participants when there is availability to address those needs (such as, giving space for further explanation or translation of the content, considering the possibility to improve the learning environment, use techniques to boost motivation – any physical, mental, emotional, cultural, or social needs for active and productive learning).
- Practice flexibility, allow space for the needs of the participants and, if running out of the time dedicated to the session, reduce the time dedicated to any element of the session, or skip it completely. However, it should be a logical decision which would not notably impact the learning outcomes or the group process in a negative way. If possible, dedicate some extratime to complete the session, or invite participants to move some part of the session (such as extensive reflection when needed for many of the participants) to another dedicated time, such as after the working day, or during a long break.
- Go with the flow of the group process and adjust minor aspects of the session elements, to reply to the needs of the group and their interest areas, however, keep in mind not getting off the track with the learning objectives of the session.
- When experiencing opposing opinions within the group and tension created because of it, remind of a respectful and tolerant behavior, as well as encourage participants to try to see where the opposing participant “is coming from” emotionally or in connection with their background, and provide space for a structured dialogue.

- Use conflict resolution techniques in case of a serious conflict escalates, for example, address the escalated conflict at the moment and offer a structured group or peer dialogue and reflection time after the session.
- Hold a stance of the no-harm principle when any harm appears to escalate or has escalated by taking the possible and appropriate measures to stop and reduce the harm produced by some participants to others (addressing the harmful behavior and requesting it to be stopped, verbal or physical intervention if needed and can be done safely, involvement of external assistance and/or emergency services).
- Re-energizing the group of learners by 1-2 minute long energizers to boost the motivation and engagement.
- Recap of the group process so far during the middle or early end of the activity to reflect on the positive aspects of the productivity so far and to remind of the following steps.
- Intervene and address any needs expressed by the participants (when related with the general availability to address the needs and when linked to the session objectives).
- When the group process and interests strongly suggest, re-evaluate possible alternative learning objectives of the session.
- When the group learning process and session gets blocked by barriers coming internally from some individuals or the group, suggest some techniques for re-activating thinking and engagement, such as taking a short break, visualizing the objectives and the barrier, etc.
- Divide the problem or a challenge into sub challenges, therefore gaining a more clear vision on how to solve various aspects of the challenge.
- Experienced challenges could and should be addressed during the group reflection time, because the exploration of the reasons of the challenge, the experienced difficulties due to the challenge and the possible solutions proposed by various individuals can provide an important learning moment for both the facilitator and the participants, and provide additional tools to address and prevent such challenges during the future sessions the facilitator would lead.

It is important to select the most appropriate tools that can be used with the specific group, that are within the range of the environment and learning setting, and that the facilitator is competent to use. As well, not always challenges can be foreseen through the risk assessment and addressing of unforeseen challenges requires the facilitator to be flexible and creative, which are competences improved by experience and over time. In addition, facilitators are invited to challenge their own perceptions and mind-set regarding the definition of a challenge and the options to solve various challenges.



**ASSESSING AND
MEASURING IMPACT**



5. ASSESSING AND MEASURING IMPACT

5.1. Evaluating Learning Outcomes

- **Conceptual framework for evaluation of learning outcomes**

Learning is the process by which an individual acquires new knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, and contacts, generating changes in behavior, decision-making, and action.”[4] Non-formal learning refers to planned, structured programs and processes of personal and social education that are designed to advance a range of skills and competencies, beyond the formal educational program. For its part, teaching is defined as the process of providing support to the learner during learning, with the goal of achieving a specific personal or professional goal. Learning goals are short statements that describe what the learner is expected to learn by the end of a given educational activity. Bloom's taxonomy [5] (see figure above) is one of the generally accepted frameworks used in the process of planning, organizing, and evaluating the learning process, i.e. teaching. Learning outcomes are expected results, indicators of what the student should know, understand, can[6] and can do after the completion of a given educational activity. The relationship between goals and learning outcomes itself is presented in the table 1.

Table 1. Relationship between goals and learning outcomes

Learning goals	Learning outcomes
The lecture’s activities are key	The emphasis is on the activities of the participants
They describe learning intentions - planned	They describe the results of learning - achieved
They include an estimate of the amount that can be learned in a given amount of time	It requires flexible timing according to the defined quantity
They are formulated with verbal nouns - training, development, building	They are formulated with active verbs

[4] Nonaka I. (2000), *Enabling Knowledge Creation* (with G. von Krogh and K. Ichijo), New York: Oxford University Press.

[5] Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals*. Vol. Handbook I:

Cognitive domain. New York: David McKay Company

[6] Simpson, E. (1972), *Educational objectives in the psychomotor domain*, vol. 3, Washington, D.C.: Gryphon House, pp. 25-30, ERIC ED010368, retrieved 3 April 2018.

Evaluation is a systematic process (see image below) to understand what a program is doing and how well the program is doing it. It is carried out to measure performance/improvement, and to identify the type of evidence that would be sufficient for the given program, i.e. interested parties. It forms part of the ongoing cycle of planning, implementation and improvement of the program. **Formative evaluations** are carried out during the development and implementation of the program and are useful if we want guidance on how to best achieve our goals or improve our program. **Summative evaluations** are conducted upon completion of the program, answer the question of the extent to which the program achieves its objectives, and may be: a) outcome evaluations (measures of short-and medium-term changes in program participants that are directly the result of the program, such as new knowledge and awareness, changes in attitudes, beliefs, social norms and behavior changes, etc. (b) **impact evaluations** (measures net effects at the community/organization/Environment level or long-term results resulting from the intervention). **Strategies** for assessing learning outcomes are classified as either direct (where students ' actual behavior is measured or evaluated) or indirect (involving surveys, focus groups, and other activities that gather impressions or opinions about the program and/or its learning goals). **SOLO taxonomy** (Structure of observed learning outcomes)[7] is a model that describes levels of increasing complexity in trainees understanding of subjects; it allows us to evaluate the work of the trainees in terms of its quality.

Table 2. Evaluation Process

Program Stage	Before Program Begins	New Program	Established Program	Mature Program
	Formative			Summative
Evaluation Type	Needs Assessment	Process/Implementation Evaluation	Outcome Evaluation	Impact Evaluation
Question asked	To what extent is the need being met? What can be done to address this need?	Is the program operating as planned?	Is the program achieving its objectives?	What predicted and unpredicted impacts has the program had?

[7] Biggs, J B.; Collis, K F. (1982). Evaluating the quality of learning: the SOLO taxonomy (structure of the observed learning outcome). Educational psychology series. New York: Academic Press. ISBN 0120975505. OCLC 7813155.

Evaluation of the learning outcomes of the Workshop "A Balkan Vision"

Objective:

To foster tolerance and understanding among Balkan youth by exploring and appreciating the positive aspects of their diverse cultures through the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and appreciate the unique strengths and positive aspects of Balkan cultures.
- Foster a sense of tolerance by focusing on shared values and positive experiences.
- Enhance communication and collaboration skills within a diverse Balkan group.
- Planned learning outcomes of the workshop "a Balkan Vision".

At the end of the workshop "a Balkan Vision" the participant will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
DESCRIBE the basic concepts of "culture."	DEMONSTRATE willingness to learn about other Balkan cultures	EXPRESS orientation towards taking independent actions to get to know other Balkan cultures
RECOGNIZE those beliefs, rules of conduct, traditions and rituals around which there is the highest degree of agreement in the Bulgarian, Romanian, Turkish, Macedonian, Greek and Serbian peoples.	PLAYS a role as a collaborator in recognizing the unique strengths and positive aspects of Balkan cultures	BUILD your relationships with others by taking into account the unique strengths and positive aspects of other cultures
RECOGNIZE those beliefs, rules of conduct, traditions and rituals in the Balkan peoples, which create social harmony, a sense of identity and belonging, a system of order, social and economic progress.	USE the term "culture" in the correct way.	ACCEPT pointing out mistakes in building relationships with other cultures

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
DESCRIBE the richness of Balkan cultures	WORKING in a group / team	ACCEPT responsibility for progress in building your relationship with other cultures
DESCRIBE the essence of cultural diversity	LEARN by observing the behavior of members of other cultures.	LISTEN carefully to the presentation of the workshop and other participants
GIVE examples of common values.	FOLLOW guidelines that ensure respect for cultural diversity	UNDERSTAND the importance of respecting cultural diversity for one's own development
EXPLAIN the concept of "tolerance."	CONDUCT activities by memorizing the principle of fair behavior towards others	EXHIBITS motivation by the principle of tolerant behavior.
DESCRIBE the characteristics of a communicative person	USE the "active listening" technique	SEES the importance of good communication with members of other cultures for personal and social development
ILLUSTRATES three basic forms of cooperation (cooperation, coordination and collaboration) through an example from his own experience	CHOOSE, according to the given situation, a suitable technique of assertive communication	SEES the importance of respecting common values for personal and social development

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<p>EXPLAIN the concept of active listening</p>	<p>CHOOSE choose, according to the given situation, a suitable technique for resolving conflicts</p>	<p>EVALUATE the mastery and application of basic principles and techniques of effective communication in accordance with their importance for harmonizing mutual relations</p>
<p>LEARN how to develop yourself through learning about other cultures</p>	<p>USE the appropriate technique of successful communication, in order to take advantage of the individual advantages of the co-workers</p>	<p>GIVE you the motivation to further develop your personal communication skills</p>



• **Workshop learning outcomes evaluation Plan "A Balkan Vision"**

Evaluation goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine whether performing a learning design provides satisfactory instruction, helps to achieve workshop goals and helps participants acquire the necessary skills and knowledge 2. Determine whether the workshop enables participants to transfer their learning into applied skills and relevant contexts 3. Determine whether the rationing scenario and learning materials are integrated into the specific needs of the trainee 4. Determine whether any changes in the planning and execution of the workshop are necessary to make it more efficient
Type of evaluation	Summative evaluation
Learning outcomes assessment strategy	Indirect
Assessment technique	<p>The same survey at the beginning and end of the learning cycle. Note: in particular, the initial survey is conducted at the beginning of the workshop "A Balkan Vision"</p>
Assessment metric	<p>Percentage of participants who have made progress in developing tolerance and understanding for members of other Balkan cultures</p>
The criteria for success	At least 75% of participants made progress
Survey questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the positive aspects of the national culture to which you belong? 2. What do you remember from the Balkan cultures through your senses (e.g. the color of Turkish markets; the harmony of Greek temples, the scents of Serbian cuisine, the rhythms of Bulgarian or Macedonian music, the purity of Romanian cities, etc.)? 3. What makes you most proud when it comes to your culture? 4. What are the positive aspects of other Balkan cultures? 5. What elements of other Balkan cultures could complement the national culture in your country? (The answer may be: I don't know.) 6. What are you interested in when it comes to other cultures? (The answer may be: I have no interest in it.) 7. What would I have singled out as common to all Balkan cultures (the answer may be: I didn't think about it.)? 8. What elements (traits) of other Balkan cultures could be adapted to the cultural needs of your country? (The answer may be: I don't know.) 9. Share your experience with someone who is from a different culture, a different religion, a different political position, etc. (The answer may be: I don't have that experience.)
Learning outcomes assessment framework	SOLO taxonomy (Structure of observed learning outcomes)

- **Workshop learning outcomes evaluation outcomes “Building Bridges of Understanding”**

Objective:

To cultivate tolerance and understanding by exploring and appreciating the positive aspects of cultural diversity through the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Learning Objectives:

- To identify and appreciate the strengths and positive aspects of diverse cultures, demonstrated through group presentations.
- To foster a sense of tolerance by focusing on shared values and experiences in small group discussions.
- To enhance communication and collaboration skills within a multicultural group, showcased during the activity's interactive elements.

- **Planned learning outcomes of the workshop „Building Bridges of Understanding“**

Upon completion of the workshop „Building Bridges of Understanding“ the participant will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
EXPLAIN the essence of the need to respect cultural differences (cultural sensitivity)	LEARN by observing similarities and differences between Balkan cultures (builds cultural awareness)	CAREFULLY follow the content presented.
IDENTIFY the advantages and disadvantages of your own culture	PERFORM activities by memorizing the advantages and positive aspects of the culture to which it belongs	CONSTRUCTIVELY cooperates with others
SUMMARIZES the advantages and positive aspects of different (Balkan) cultures	PERFORM activities by memorizing the advantages and positive aspects of other Balkan cultures	SHOWS consideration for members of other cultures and helps them

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<p>UNDERSTAND key aspects of the concept of intercultural communication</p>	<p>FOLLOW the guidelines on effective intercultural communication</p>	<p>ASSESSES common values</p>
<p>APPLIES in new conditions of knowledge about effective intercultural communication</p>	<p>ADJUST your actions in accordance with the rules of intercultural communication</p>	<p>DEVELOPS a common perspective</p>
<p>USE knowledge about key aspects of non- verbal communication</p>	<p>LEARN by observing the signs of nonverbal communication.</p>	<p>CREATE your own opinion about the common elements of Balkan cultures</p>
<p>UNDERSTAND key aspects of the concept of intercultural communication</p>	<p>FOLLOW the guidelines on effective intercultural communication</p>	<p>ASSESSES common values</p>
<p>APPLIES in new conditions of knowledge about effective intercultural communication</p>	<p>ADJUST your actions in accordance with the rules of intercultural communication</p>	<p>DEVELOPS a common perspective</p>
<p>USE knowledge about key aspects of non- verbal communication</p>	<p>LEARN by observing the signs of nonverbal communication.</p>	<p>CREATE your own opinion about the common elements of Balkan cultures</p>

- **Learning outcomes evaluation plan of the "Building Bridges of Understanding" workshop**

The evaluation plan defined in point 1.2.2 is fully applied, with the presented evaluation survey being conducted at the end of the "Building Bridges of Understanding" workshop.

- **Evaluation of learning outcomes of the thematic WORLD CAFE**

Objective:

To promote tolerance, acceptance, and understanding among youth from Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and North Macedonia through open and constructive dialogue.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop a deeper understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds through guided discussions.
- Foster a sense of acceptance and tolerance for diverse perspectives.
- Enhance communication and collaboration skills in a multicultural setting.

- **Planned learning outcomes of the thematic WORLD CAFE**

After completing the thematic WORLD CAFE, the participant will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
UNDERSTAND the difference between "deep" and "surface" culture	LEARN by observing similarities and differences between Balkan cultures (builds cultural awareness)	CAREFULLY follow the presented contents
EXPLAIN in your own words the ability of a culture to maintain continuity and ensure that a group of people remains true to its original self, identity and values	DEMONSTRATES willingness to get to know other Balkan cultures	CREATES own opinion about the common elements of Balkan cultures
EXPLAIN in your own words the key factors in the development of your culture, including historical ones	PLAYS THE ROLE of collaborators in recognizing the unique strengths and positive aspects of Balkan cultures	SHOWS consideration for members of other cultures and helps them

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<p>SUMMARIZES the influence of historical factors in the development of Balkan cultures</p>	<p>USE the elements of the term "culture" in the correct way</p>	<p>ACTIVELY BUILDS contacts with members of other culture</p>
<p>ANALYZES cultural diversity in the Balkans</p>	<p>PRACTICES working in a group/team</p>	<p>ACCEPTS other perspectives</p>
<p>USE knowledge about the concept of "tolerance"</p>	<p>FOLLOW the instructions on tolerant behavior</p>	<p>MEANINGFULLY ORGANIZES the work on solving the set tasks</p>
<p>DISCUSSES key aspects of Balkan cultures</p>	<p>HARMONISES its actions with the criteria for establishing a common perspective</p>	<p>ASSESES common values</p>
<p>UNDERSTAND key aspects of the concept of intercultural communication</p>	<p>FOLLOW instructions on effective intercultural communication</p>	<p>DEVELOPS a common perspective</p>
<p>APPLIES in new conditions of knowledge about effective intercultural communication</p>	<p>ADJUSTS his actions in accordance with the rules of intercultural communication</p>	<p>CREATES own opinion about the common elements of Balkan cultures</p>
<p>USE knowledge about key aspects of non-verbal communication</p>	<p>LEARN by observing signs of non-verbal communication</p>	<p>CONSTRUCTIVELY cooperates with others</p>

- Evaluation plan for learning outcomes of the thematic WORLD CAFE

The evaluation plan defined in point 1.2.2 is fully applied, with the fact that the presented evaluation survey is conducted at the beginning of the thematic WORD CAFE.

- **Evaluation of workshop learning outcomes „Funny Balkans“**

Objective:

To promote cultural understanding and connection among Balkan youth through humor and comedy.

Learning Objectives:

- Through humorous expressions, participants will recognize and identify cultural nuances, customs, and traditions from various Balkan countries.
- Develop Cross-Cultural Empathy: Participants will develop empathy by understanding and appreciating different cultural perspectives
- Planned learning outcomes of the workshop „Funny Balkans“

Upon completion of the workshop „Funny Balkans“, the participant will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
RECOGNIZE those beliefs, rules of conduct, traditions and rituals that characterize other Balkan cultures	LEARN by observing similarities and differences between Balkan cultures (builds cultural awareness	CAREFULLY follow the content presented.
UNDERSTAND the deeper meaning of the various customs and traditions of the Balkan peoples	CARRIES out activities by memorizing the benefits and positive aspects of other Balkan cultures	CONSTRUCTIVELY cooperates with others
UNDERSTAND the common values of the Balkan cultures	DEMONSTRATE willingness to learn about other Balkan cultures	SHOWS consideration for members of other cultures and helps them

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
USE knowledge of other cultures to design a common perspective	FOLLOW the guidelines on tolerant behavior	ACTIVELY BUILDS contacts with members of other culture
EXPLAIN the essence of the need to respect cultural differences (cultural sensitivity)	ORIENTES members of other cultures towards a common perspective	ACCEPTS other perspectives
SUMMARIZES the advantages and positive aspects of different (Balkan) cultures	HARMONISES its actions with the criteria for establishing a common perspective	MEANINGFULLY ORGANIZES the work on solving the set tasks

- **Workshop learning outcomes evaluation Plan „Funny Balkans“**

The evaluation plan defined in point 1.2.2 is fully applied, but the evaluation survey presented is conducted at the end of the workshop „Funny Balkans“.



5.2. Self–Reflection and Participant Feedback

- **Conceptual framework for self-reflection and feedback**











Self-reflection	The process of internal communication with oneself. When someone takes the time to reflect on their work, they analyze the reasons that led to the progress made in knowledge, skills and abilities, where it came from, what the learning outcome means to them, whether it is effective for them and what they can do about it. Anyone interested in making progress in their life – personally or professionally – can benefit from self-reflection. There is self-reflection as a) 'thinking in action' and b) 'thinking about action'. Self-reflection in action occurs while we are involved in a situation, during which we become aware of what we are thinking, feeling, and doing. Self-reflection should be based on criteria that reflect personal goals and expectations. This implies that the student or lecturer himself defines what good work is, by making it part of the process from learning to evaluation.
Feedback	It is defined as the reaction or opinion of the participants about the efforts of those affected by it. Like self-reflection, it is a useful element for changing course in personal development. The difference is that here another person such as a colleague or lecturer gives feedback, which can be informal, formal, formative, or summative. It should be timely, accurate, concrete and effective, so that it can learn from observed mistakes and successes. Feedback is an essential tool for motivating and monitoring learning. Integrating feedback into your daily or weekly routine makes it part of your personal learning process. Whether we are giving or receiving, certain skills are necessary to effectively give and receive feedback.
Two types of self-reflection and feedback	Feedback and self-reflection can be classified into two types: internal and external. Internal feedback and self-reflection are based on one's own perceptions, feelings, and judgments about personal performance. External feedback and self-reflection is based on information, opinions and suggestions from others, such as peers, mentors or experts. Both types of feedback and self-reflection are valuable and complementary, as they can provide different perspectives and insights into personal performance.
The advantages of self-reflection and feedback	The most important principles of learning, because they emphasize student autonomy, independent learning and lifelong learning. They improve personal performance by increasing self-awareness, self-efficacy and self-regulation. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors and how they affect one's outcomes. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's own abilities to achieve personal goals. Self-regulation is the ability to control one's impulses, emotions and actions and to align them with one's values and standards. By receiving feedback and engaging in self-reflection, these skills are improved and personal performance is improved

<p>Sources of self-reflection and feedback</p>	<p>They come from a variety of sources, such as self-assessment, peer feedback, mentor feedback, or expert feedback. To assess one's own performance and identify one's strengths and areas for improvement, tools such as journals, checklists, rubrics or quizzes are used. Sharing feedback with colleagues, classmates, or friends who share similar goals or interests can also be helpful. In addition, advice can be sought from a mentor, coach or teacher with more experience in the field. Or feedback can be sought from experts with high standards and credibility in the domain who can offer objective and critical feedback.</p>
<p>Self-reflection and feedback strategies</p>	<p>Effective use of feedback and self-reflection involves planning through setting goals, standards, values, and sources of feedback. While working on a task or project, monitor your performance and collect feedback. After completing a task or project, review your performance and reflect on what went well and what can be improved. Actions to be taken to improve performance are identified, such as revising goals, standards, values, or sources of feedback or changing strategies or behaviors.</p>
<p>Challenges of self-reflection and feedback</p>	<p>When we tend to overestimate or underestimate our performance, or to focus on the positive or negative aspects of feedback, depending on our current mood. When we have difficulty accepting feedback that conflicts with personal expectations, preferences or beliefs. When we have difficulty interpreting or integrating feedback that is inconsistent, unclear, or conflicting. Also, when we are overwhelmed with feedback that is too frequent, too much or too complex. To overcome these obstacles, it is important to remain open-minded and flexible about feedback and self-reflection.</p>

- **Self-reflection of learning outcomes based on the SOLO taxonomy**

SOLO (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes) taxonomy [9]

- A structured framework that participants can use to advance their thinking and learning -

Prestructural	Unistructural	Multistructural	Relational	Extended abstract
				
Learning outcomes show unconnected information and no organisation.	Learning outcomes show simple connections but importance is not noted.	Learning outcomes show connections are made but significance to overall meaning is missing.	Learning outcomes show connections are made and parts are synthesised with the overall meaning.	Learning outcomes go beyond the subject and make links to other concepts – generalising, predicting, evaluating.
No idea	One idea	Many ideas	Related ideas	Extended ideas
				

SOLO levels, symbols and hand signs[9]

Levels of understanding	<p>The SOLO taxonomy is divided into five levels of understanding performance, with knowledge being integrated at each level of the taxonomy. Levels of self-efficacy range from low (pre-structural) to high (extended summary). The SOLO taxonomy is hierarchical and each stage includes the previous one and adds something to it:</p> <p>SOLO 1: <i>Pre-structural level</i> - I acquire pieces of unrelated information. I have no understanding of the subject, use irrelevant information and/or completely miss the point. Keywords: I fail; I do not know; I'm missing the point. Example: To a question like "What do you understand by the term culture?", I answer "I don't know"</p> <p>SOLO 2: <i>Uni-structural level</i> - I can deal with only one important aspect of a subject, topic, or task. I am able to make simple and obvious connections, but I do not understand the wider significance of the information I am receiving. Key words: define, identify, name, label, follow simple instructions, follow, reproduce, find, count, arrange, recognize, find. Example: To a question like "What do you understand by the term culture?", I answer "Folk music".</p> <p>SOLO 3: <i>Multiple Level</i> - I understand several aspects of a subject, topic, or task, but their relationship to each other and to the whole remains separate. I do not connect ideas and concepts around a topic, but treat them independently. Key words: describe, state, complete, continue, combine, calculate. Example: To a question like "What do you understand by the term culture?", I answer "It is everything - material and spiritual, that man has created with his work." It has its own creative and reproductive dimension"</p>
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[8] John Biggs and Kevin Collins (1982) developed the SOLO (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes) taxonomy as a systematic way of describing how a learner's performance grows in complexity when learning different subjects or mastering tasks. SOLO Taxonomy provides a simple, reliable and robust model for three levels of understanding i.e. Surface level, Deep level and Conceptual level (Biggs and Collis 1982).

[9] Source: [4] Biggs, J B.; Collis, K F. (1982). *Evaluating the quality of learning: the SOLO taxonomy (structure of the observed learning outcome)*. Educational psychology series. New York: Academic Press. ISBN 0120975505. OCLC 7813155.

<p>Levels of understanding</p>	<p>SOLO 4: <i>Relational Level</i> - I can understand the relationships between several aspects and how they can fit into a whole. I respond with an understanding of the topic and am able to fit all the pieces together. Key words: order, classify, compare and contrast, explain (cause and effect), form an analogy, organize, differentiate, question, relate, apply, describe. Example: To a question like "What do you understand by the term culture?", I answer "Culture is a complex social phenomenon and a very broad concept that includes all the material and spiritual values of human work in nature, society and thought." As a social phenomenon, it contains several different components: 1) it is about the creation, creation and production of material and spiritual cultural goods; 2) there is a process of transmission, communication, i.e. communication, cultural goods should be made accessible; 3) the process of acceptance, reception of cultural values or the process of selection or rejection."</p> <p>SOLO 5: <i>Extended Abstract Level</i> - I can make connections not only within a given subject field, but also beyond it. I am able to generalize a structure beyond what is given, I can perceive a structure from many different perspectives and take ideas into new areas. I have the ability to generalize, hypothesize, criticize or theorize. Key words: generalize, predict, evaluate, think, hypothesize, theorize, create, prove, justify, argue, compile, prioritize, design, construct, report, explain, apply, analyze. Example: To a question like "What do you understand by the term culture?", I answer "Culture is a complex social phenomenon and a very broad concept that includes all the material and spiritual values of human work in nature, society and thought." As a social phenomenon, it contains many different components and functions: 1) it is about the creation, creation and production of material and spiritual cultural goods; 2) there is a process of transmission, communication, i.e. communication, cultural goods should be made accessible; 3) the process of acceptance, acceptance of cultural values or the process of selection or rejection. One of the basic functions of culture is the transmission of cultural goods and values to individuals and groups, from generation to generation, from generation to generation. The development of culture is influenced by: Human biological needs and drives, psychological processes and basic human characteristics (upright posture, vocal apparatus, and physical and social environment. Differences in culture arise due to: cultural variability, cultural relativity, differences in the environment and human ingenuity and the ability to absorb and expand a new culture"</p>
<p>Why the SOLO taxonomy is useful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps the participant/teacher to think meaningfully about what the next level of their learning is. • It is used by lecturers and students together. • Enables effective success criteria to be identified and implemented. • Offers delivery and feedback for learning outcomes. • Learners understand the reasons for everything they do and understand that improvements are a consequence of their own strategies • Shows the difference between deep and surface understanding, helping learners understand where they are on that spectrum and what they need to do to move forward.
<p>A good tool for self-reflection based on the SOLO taxonomy</p>	<p>The "I can" statement is a commonly accepted tool for using effective self-reflection based on the SOLO taxonomy. In this context, this statement means: "I am aware of my personal development and think about my knowledge, skills and experiences as a way to improve my well-being and face challenges." I relate to this statement because I often think about what I can do to improve your study habits. When done well, "I can" statements help me understand what I'm learning about, why it's important, how to learn, and what I need to do to show that I've learned. These statements also convey learning progress by connecting what was learned from yesterday, to today, and tomorrow. Finally, the "I can" statements allow me to better self-assess my progress by allowing me to answer three questions about my learning: 1. Where do I need to go? 2. Where am I now? 3. What do I need to do to bridge the gap between where I need to go and where I am now? Example of an "I can" statement: I can explain in my own words the difference between my own and other Balkan cultures.</p>

- **Feedback from participants on the quality of leadership and facilitation of the workshop/Word Cafe**

Good workshop management is the ability to encourage thinking and discussion, to make everyone feel comfortable, to participate and share their ideas, while making sure everything is on schedule and on time.

Measuring the quality of leadership is one of the most important metrics of the workshop and something we ask our participants for feedback on. Questions asked include the following:

- Did your workshop leader run the workshop smoothly and on time?
- On a scale of 1 - 10, with 10 being excellent, how would you rate the skills of your facilitator to make the workshop engaging and interesting?
- What advice would you like to share with your facilitator to make the workshop run better?
- What did you like most during the workshop?

Feedbacks from participants, i.e. their answers to these questions are usually obtained through a survey.



5.3. Long-Term Assessment Learning Outcomes

- **Conceptual framework for long-term assessment of learning outcomes**

Impact	Defines as the pronounced effect that something, especially something new, has on a situation, person, particular entity, or environment. It is a multidimensional concept. "In the impact assessment process, the term impact describes all the changes that are expected to occur as a result of the implementation and application of a given policy option/intervention. Such impacts can occur in different time frames, affect different actors and be relevant at different levels (local, regional, national and EU). In the context of evaluation, impact refers to changes associated with a particular intervention that occur over the long term." [10]
Types of impact	<i>The influence is considered to be intentional or unintentional, positive or negative. In a special sense, it can be foreseen or unforeseen. Intended impacts are always positive.</i>
Dimensions of influence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Application</i> - Projection; Prospective; Retrospective. 2. <i>Scope</i> - Specific, pre-defined, knowable; Undefined, unexpected, unknowable; 3. <i>Subject and level of change</i> - a) Subject or unit: Individual, Household, Community group, Network, Institution, Population, Sector, Policy, Environment. b) Level: Local, State/province, National, Regional, Continental Global 4. <i>Degree of separation</i> - Direct and fairly certain; Direct but uncertain; Moderate; Distant and uncertain. 5. <i>Immediacy, rate and durability of change</i> - a) Time frames: Immediate- to short-term change, Seasonal, Short- to medium-term, Medium- to long-term, Long-term, b) Permanence: Irreversible, Reversible/changeable, More durable but still reversible. 6. <i>Homogeneity of benefits</i> - Predominantly uniform benefits, Variable benefits, Rival benefits.
Impact and outcome	Impact and outcome are two related but distinct concepts in the evaluation of programs, policies, and interventions. Outcome refers to the immediate or short-term results of a program or intervention. It looks at specific, easily defined results or outcomes. Impact, on the other hand, refers to the long-term effects of the program or intervention - the changes or differences that have occurred as a result. Impact is usually expressed in terms of benefits or consequences for intended users or stakeholders, such as improvements in health outcomes or job creation. In essence, an impact is a long-term effect of an outcome, with a wider scope.
Sustainability and impact	The concept of impact is particularly relevant in the context of sustainability, as it emphasizes the need to consider the long-term effects of our actions and decisions on the natural world and the communities that inhabit it. This may include impact on future generations, as well as impact on local and national institutions, or global systems such as international institutions, eco-systems, etc.
Impact framework of workshops and World Cafe	The impact of the workshops and World Cafe realized within the "Meet Your Neighbors 2" project segments the impact of the work of its implementers on providing support to young people in training for intercultural understanding and acceptance of diversity

[10] Official Definition Of Impact By The European Commission, <https://youmatter.world/en/definition/impact-definition/>

- **Assessment of the impact of achieved learning outcomes**

Objectives of impact assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to decision makers about the key effects of the implemented activities • Incorporate lessons learned into new project processes
Impact assessment framework with measurement aspects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Application</i> - The concept of impact is applied retrospectively, in order to measure the effects of the intervention and adjust it in subsequent project cycles. Default aspect of measurement - Asking questions. For example: Have you expanded your contacts with members of other Balkan cultures in the past period? Do you feel that you now connect more closely with members of other cultures? As peer educators, have you applied your skills for intercultural understanding and respect for diversity so far, in a formal or informal way? Have you discussed in your organization the need to improve current cultural policies? 2. <i>Scope</i> - A broad impact that is not limited to predefined variables is assessed. As many changes are considered as make sense to make a useful judgment (and are feasible to measure), including variables that may not have been predicted. Implicit aspect of measurement: Mode of inference - Inductive methods are used. 3. <i>Subject and level of change</i> - <i>Subject of change</i>: Participant; Local youth group; NGOs; Network of project partners. Default aspect of measurement - Units of measurement: Participant; organization; network. <i>Level of change</i>: Local. Default aspect of measurement - Unit of measurement: Unit of local self-government. 4. <i>Degree of separation between intervention and impact</i> - <i>Moderate</i>. For example. a) Strengthened intercultural awareness of participants will improve their motivation to meet members of other cultures, which will lead to new contacts. New contacts will result in establishing deeper connections with members of other cultures around the world. b) Strengthened intercultural awareness of participants - peer educators will direct them to create, or get involved in some of the projects where they will apply their abilities to other groups of young people. Also, in informal contacts with their peers, they will act to strengthen their intercultural awareness. c) Strengthened intercultural awareness of both groups of participants will increase their motivation to follow current cultural policies at the local level. As members of the organization, they can create proposals for the improvement of those policies and initiate appropriate initiatives with local decision-makers. Implicit aspect of measurement - Extent of confounding factors, strength of causal claims and consideration of alternative explanations.

- **Assessment of the impact of achieved learning outcomes**

Impact assessment framework with measurement aspects	<p>5. <i>Immediacy, speed and durability of change</i> - Time frame: Long-term. Implicit aspect of measurement: Frequency of measurement - Measurement is performed once a year, after one year of the intervention. Durability: Irreversible. Educational changes are irreversible changes.</p> <p>6. <i>Homogeneity of benefits</i> - Variable benefits. One type of benefit is expected for the group of young people aged 18-30, who will be trained as peer educators; and another type of benefit is expected for the group of young people aged 18-25 who will be educated for the basic level of intercultural understanding and respect for diversity. Default aspect of measurement: Extent of breakdown - Groups of trainees.</p>
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**ETHICAL
CONSIDERATION**

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

6.1. Cultural Sensitivity

In Erasmus+, the programme that includes a lot of intercultural youth work, cultural sensitivity serves as the bedrock for fostering meaningful connections and dismantling stereotypes. We approach and engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds through the lens. By acknowledging the richness of each participant's cultural identity, we pave the way for a collaborative and respectful environment.

Cultural sensitivity involves recognizing, appreciating, and valuing the diverse cultures present within an international youth group. It is not merely a checkbox on a to-do list but an ongoing commitment to understanding the intricate tapestry of beliefs, traditions, and norms that shape each individual's worldview.

Intercultural interactions can be transformative when approached with cultural sensitivity. It is not about erasing differences but about building bridges that span diverse cultures. This introduction sets the stage for youth workers to become ambassadors of cultural sensitivity, fostering an atmosphere where every participant feels heard, seen, and respected.

Working with youngsters from the Balkan region

When working with international groups of young people from the Balkans, it is important to be mindful of the diverse cultural backgrounds and sensitivities of the participants. This includes being aware of:

- *Differences in communication styles:* Young people from different cultures may have different communication styles, such as different levels of directness or different interpretations of non-verbal cues. It is important to be patient and understanding, and to avoid making assumptions about what someone means based on their cultural background.
- *Differences in religious beliefs:* The Balkans is a region with a rich diversity of religious beliefs. It is important to be respectful of all religions and to avoid making any discriminatory or offensive statements.

- *Differences in political views:* The Balkans has a complex political history, and young people may have strong feelings about certain political issues. It is important to create a safe space for all participants to express their views, and to avoid engaging in debates that could be divisive or upsetting.

Understanding Cultural Differences

Cultural differences are the threads that weave the fabric of diversity. Each participant brings a unique set of customs, beliefs, and practices, contributing to the vibrant mosaic of the youth group. Understanding these differences goes beyond surface-level acknowledgment – it involves a genuine curiosity to delve into the richness of each culture. Begin by recognizing that diversity goes beyond the obvious markers such as language or attire. It encompasses varied communication styles, attitudes toward time, approaches to conflict, and even perceptions of personal space. Emphasize to youth workers that true understanding requires looking beyond stereotypes and embracing the nuanced complexities of each individual.

Understanding cultural differences is a two-way street. Encourage participants to actively share elements of their culture – whether through traditional cuisine, rituals, or storytelling. This reciprocal exchange not only enriches the experience for individuals but also nurtures a sense of shared cultural understanding within the group.

Youth workers should be aware of their own biases and assumptions. Unconscious biases can influence perceptions and interactions. By acknowledging these biases, youth workers can actively work to overcome them, creating a more inclusive environment where stereotypes are challenged rather than reinforced.

Building Cultural Competence & Establishing Inclusive Environments

Cultural competence is a dynamic and ongoing process of developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively navigate and engage with diverse cultures. In the context of intercultural youth work, building cultural competence is a crucial step toward creating an environment that fosters understanding and collaboration.

Strategies for Building Cultural Competence:

Self-Reflection: Encourage youth workers to reflect on their own cultural background, biases, and assumptions. This self-awareness forms the foundation for cultural competence.

Educational Initiatives: Facilitate training sessions and workshops that provide information on various cultures, their histories, and contemporary issues. This includes exploring the concept of cultural relativism.

Cultural Immersion: Encourage direct experiences with different cultures through activities such as cultural exchanges, immersion programs, or engaging with diverse communities.

Language Learning: Promote the learning of basic phrases or expressions in the languages of the cultures represented in the group. Language is a powerful tool for cultural connection.

Embedding cultural competence into youth work practices involves incorporating cultural considerations into planning, decision-making, and interactions. This integration ensures that cultural competence is not a separate entity but an integral part of the overall approach. Regular reflection sessions can help them identify areas for improvement and celebrate successes in creating a culturally competent environment.

Establishing an inclusive environment is the cornerstone of successful intercultural youth work. It involves creating a space where all participants feel valued, respected, and able to contribute regardless of their cultural background.

The youth workers should take in consideration the Key Principles of Inclusivity:

Equity: Ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to participate and benefit from the program. Recognize and address any existing disparities.

Representation: Aim for diverse representation in leadership roles, decision-making processes, and program design. This promotes a sense of belonging and shared ownership.

Language Learning: Promote the learning of basic phrases or expressions in the languages of the cultures represented in the group. Language is a powerful tool for cultural connection.

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Equity: Ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to participate and benefit from the program. Recognize and address any existing disparities.

Representation: Aim for diverse representation in leadership roles, decision-making processes, and program design. This promotes a sense of belonging and shared ownership.

Cultural Celebrations: Organize events and activities that celebrate various cultures, fostering an atmosphere of appreciation and mutual respect.

Flexible Programming: Adapt program structures to accommodate diverse needs, schedules, and preferences. Flexibility promotes inclusivity and participation.

Handling Cultural Misunderstandings

Cultural misunderstandings are inevitable in diverse environments, especially in international working groups. How they are handled, however, can significantly affect the overall dynamics of the group. This section provides guidance on recognizing, addressing, and learning from cultural misunderstandings.

- **How to identify Cultural Misunderstandings?**

Active Listening: Encourage active listening to understand the perspectives and intentions of others, especially when misunderstandings arise.

Open Communication Channels: Create an environment where participants feel comfortable expressing their concerns or seeking clarification when they perceive a misunderstanding.

Observation: Train youth workers to be observant and recognize non-verbal cues that may indicate discomfort or confusion.

- **How to address to Cultural Misunderstandings?**

Mediation: In cases where conflicts arise from cultural misunderstandings, use mediation techniques that promote understanding and resolution.

Cultural Competence Training: Offer targeted training sessions to address specific cultural nuances and potential points of conflict.

Facilitated Discussions: Provide structured discussions where participants can openly share their perspectives and learn from one another.

- **What Preventive Measures can a youth worker take?**

Implement preventive measures to reduce the occurrence of cultural misunderstandings, such as:

- Clear communication about cultural norms and expectations.
- Proactive education on cultural differences.
- Encouraging a culture of respect and openness within the group.

Handling cultural misunderstandings requires a combination of proactive measures, effective communication, and a commitment to continuous learning. This approach ensures that conflicts become opportunities for growth and increased cultural understanding within the group.

Practical Tips for Youth Workers:

- Engage in cultural competency training to enhance understanding.
- Foster an open-door policy, encouraging participants to share aspects of their culture.
- Utilize icebreaker activities that celebrate cultural diversity and promote interaction.

Understanding cultural differences lays the groundwork for a thriving multicultural community. It enables youth workers to guide participants beyond stereotypes, fostering an environment where diversity is not only tolerated but also celebrated.

6.2. Addressing Controversial Topics

Addressing controversial topics is a crucial aspect of a youth worker's role in the Erasmus+ program. It involves navigating conversations that may evoke diverse and sometimes opposing perspectives within a multicultural context. The significance of effectively handling controversial topics lies in several key aspects:

Youth workers play a pivotal role in establishing environments where all participants, regardless of cultural backgrounds, feel included and valued. Addressing controversial topics requires creating a safe and open space that encourages individuals to express their viewpoints without fear of judgment. In doing so, youth workers contribute to fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect within the diverse group.

Controversial topics often stem from cultural differences, historical contexts, or varying societal norms. When youth workers skillfully address these topics, they facilitate a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives present in the group. This promotes cultural empathy and broadens participants' worldview, aligning with the core principles of the Erasmus+ program that emphasize intercultural learning and cooperation.

Engaging with controversial topics encourages participants to think critically and analytically. Youth workers guide participants in questioning assumptions, considering multiple viewpoints, and developing their own informed opinions. This aligns with the Erasmus+ program's goal of fostering active citizenship and empowering young people to think independently and critically about the world around them.

Addressing controversial topics is an opportunity to enhance communication and dialogue skills among participants. Youth workers facilitate constructive conversations, emphasizing active listening, respectful communication, and the ability to express opinions articulately.

These skills are not only valuable in the context of discussing sensitive issues but are transferable to various aspects of participants' personal and professional lives.

In addition, the controversial topics may lead to disagreements or conflicts within the group. Youth workers, by addressing these topics effectively, contribute to the development of conflict resolution skills among participants. Learning to navigate disagreements respectfully is a vital life skill, and youth workers play a key role in guiding participants through these processes.

For the youth workers and social workers, when working with young people from the Balkans, it is inevitable that controversial topics will come up. These topics may include:

- *Nationalism and ethnic identity:* The Balkan regions have a long a history of nationalism and ethnic conflict. It is important to be aware of this history and to be sensitive to the feelings of participants who may have been personally affected by conflict as even in the present there are conflicts smaller or bigger as seen by the societies.
- *The legacy of communism and socialism:* The Balkans was under communist rule for much of the 20th century. Young people may have different perspectives on this period of history. It is important to be respectful of all viewpoints and to avoid imposing one's own views on others.
- *The role of religion in society:* Religion plays a significant role in the lives of many people in the Balkans. However, there is also a growing movement of secularism. It is important to be respectful of all religious and non-religious beliefs.

Setting Ground Rules

Setting ground rules is a crucial step to cultivate a positive and inclusive environment. Creating ground rules is akin to drawing the blueprint for constructive engagement. It establishes a framework that guides participants on how to interact, ensuring a sense of order and predictability. More importantly, these rules contribute to a safe space where participants feel secure expressing their thoughts, crucial for addressing sensitive or controversial topics.

For ground rules to be effective, they must embody certain key elements. Mutual respect is paramount - participants must treat each other respectfully, regardless of cultural differences. Active listening should be encouraged, fostering a culture where understanding precedes response. Inclusivity should be explicit in the rules, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. Confidentiality might be a necessary rule in discussions where privacy is critical.

Understanding the cultural dynamics at play is crucial when designing ground rules. Different cultures have distinct communication norms, levels of directness, and acceptable forms of expression.

Ground rules should be flexible, allowing for customization based on the specific nature of each session or activity.

- The process of creating ground rules should be inclusive. Participants should actively contribute to the formulation, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. Clarifying each rule and facilitating group discussions ensure a shared understanding, providing an opportunity for participants to express concerns or suggestions.
- Consistency in enforcing ground rules is vital. Rules should be applied consistently and fairly, reinforcing a sense of accountability among participants. Adaptability is key - be open to revisiting and adapting ground rules as needed to accommodate the evolving dynamics of the group.

Setting ground rules is a strategic and intentional process that lays the foundation for positive and productive group dynamics. By incorporating the principles of respect, active listening, and inclusivity, youth workers contribute to the creation of environments aligned with the ethical standards and objectives of the Erasmus+ program.

Managing Emotional Responses

Engaging in discussions on controversial topics inevitably stirs emotional responses among participants. The youth workers should understand the significance of managing these emotions effectively, creating an environment conducive to constructive dialogue and intercultural understanding.

Controversial topics often evoke strong emotional reactions rooted in personal beliefs, values, and experiences. Acknowledging the emotional nature of these discussions is crucial for creating a safe and respectful space.

Youth workers and facilitators under Erasmus+ programme should keep in mind the Key Strategies for Managing Emotional Responses:

Emotional Intelligence Training:

- *Objective:* Equip participants with the skills to recognize and regulate their own emotions and empathize with others.
- *Implementation:* Integrate workshops focused on emotional intelligence, emphasizing self-awareness and empathy as tools for navigating emotional responses.

De-escalation Techniques:

- Objective: Provide participants with effective methods to de-escalate heightened emotions during discussions.
- Implementation: Offer training on de-escalation techniques, emphasizing the importance of remaining calm, active listening, and finding common ground.

Structured Dialogue Formats:

- Objective: Channel emotional responses into constructive dialogue.
- Implementation: Utilize structured formats such as roundtable discussions, where participants take turns expressing their emotions and perspectives without interruptions.

Encouraging Reflection:

- Objective: Foster reflection on emotional responses to promote self-awareness.
- Implementation: Introduce reflective activities where participants can journal or share personal reflections on their emotional reactions, encouraging a deeper understanding of their own perspectives.

Moderated Discussions:

- Objective: Provide a neutral mediator to guide discussions and ensure a balanced and respectful exchange.
- Implementation: Appoint a skilled facilitator to moderate discussions, intervening when necessary to maintain a constructive atmosphere.

Reflective Debriefing:

- Objective: Facilitate a post-discussion debrief to process emotional responses and lessons learned.
- Implementation: Allocate time for participants to collectively reflect on the emotional aspects of the discussion, sharing insights and strategies for improved emotional management in future conversations.

Ethical Standards & Considerations in Practice for the Youth Workers

Youth workers in the Erasmus+ program should have high ethical standards. Addressing controversial topics requires a commitment to fairness, impartiality, and cultural sensitivity. By navigating these discussions with integrity and upholding ethical principles, youth workers contribute to the overall success and positive impact of Erasmus+ initiatives. Youth workers can create a safe and inclusive environment for all participants, and can help them to develop the skills they need to navigate diversity and promote intercultural understanding.

When addressing controversial topics, for the youth workers it is important:

- To create a safe and respectful environment: Participants should feel comfortable expressing their views without fear of judgment or ridicule.
- To use a neutral approach: The facilitator should not express their own opinions on the topic.
- Focus on understanding different perspectives: The goal is not to reach a consensus, but to help participants understand the different perspectives that exist.
- To use appropriate activities: There are a number of non-formal exercises that can be used to address controversial topics in a safe and productive way.

When introducing an activity, take a moment to explain the purpose of the activity and to ask participants if there is anything they would like to avoid discussing.

- If a participant makes an offensive or insensitive statement, gently redirect the conversation and remind participants of the importance of being respectful of others.
- If a participant is visibly upset by a discussion, offer them support and let them know that they are not alone.
- At the end of an activity, take some time to reflect on what participants have learned and to identify any challenges that arose.



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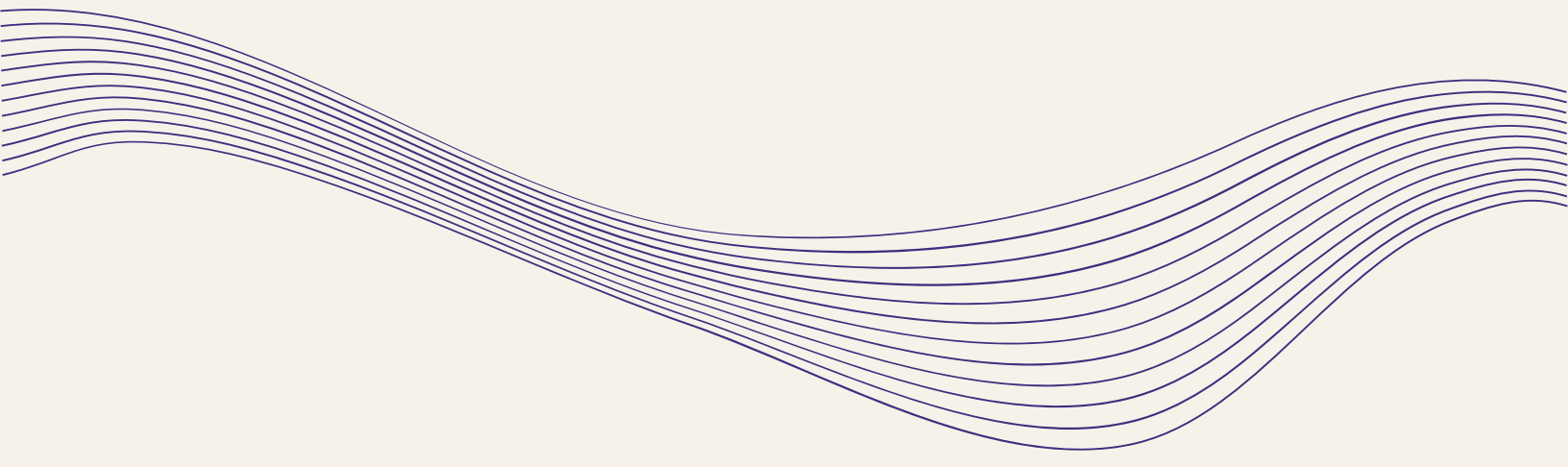
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CONCLUSION



This thorough guide for youth workers focuses on the vital role that cultural competency plays in creating an inclusive and tolerant society. The comprehensive strategy outlined in the handbook emphasizes youth workers' capacity to be transforming actors for positive change.

The necessity of directly addressing prejudices and stereotypes is one important point that is emphasized. Youth workers may break down harmful stereotypes and create an environment where diversity is appreciated instead of spreading divisive narratives by participating in open debate and educational activities. The guide places a strong emphasis on performing extensive needs assessments, acknowledging that creating actions that connect and have a lasting effect requires a detailed understanding of participants' backgrounds and needs.

The guide explores the topics of civic education and democracy in action, going beyond immediate solutions. It emphasizes the youth's role as active participants in determining Europe's future and the transformative power of knowledgeable and involved citizens. By instilling a sense of responsibility and civic duty, youth workers contribute to the development of a society where individuals are not just recipients but active contributors to the democratic process.

Ethical considerations are integrated throughout the guide, with a specific focus on cultural sensitivity and navigating controversial topics. Acknowledging the complex landscape of diverse perspectives, the guide urges youth workers to approach their roles with a heightened awareness of cultural nuances and to address potentially contentious subjects with tact and empathy. This ethical lens ensures that the impact of their efforts is not only positive but also sustainable.

Youth workers who follow the strategies outlined in this guide are not only better able to make an impact, but they also become architects of a future that is inclusive and peaceful. Through their commitment to fostering inclusivity, challenging prejudices, and instilling a sense of civic responsibility, youth workers contribute meaningfully to the creation of a society where every individual's unique background is not just acknowledged but celebrated. In this way, the guide serves as a roadmap for youth workers to navigate the complex landscape of cultural diversity, ultimately forging a path toward a more unified and understanding world.

Appendices

Additional Materials

Exercises and workshops ideas

If you are a youth worker or an Erasmus+ facilitator / trainer, here are 10 exercises & workshops ideas that you can use when working with groups about Intercultural Understanding and Acceptance of Diversity topic. These exercises and workshops are designed to be flexible and adaptable based on the specific needs and context of the participants. You can modify them to suit the goals of your programs and projects and based on the group dynamics and feedback given by the participants.

1. Cultural Exchange Fair

Type: Workshop and Exhibition

Objective:

- To facilitate direct interactions between participants from different cultures.
- To showcase and celebrate the diversity of each culture represented in the group.

Duration: Half-day or full-day event

Materials and Resources:

- Booths or tables for each culture.
- Display materials (posters, artifacts, traditional clothing).
- Cultural exchange passports for participants to collect stamps.

Instructions:

1. Each culture sets up a booth to represent their traditions, customs, and artifacts.
2. Participants rotate through the booths, engaging in conversations and activities.
3. Provide cultural exchange passports for participants to document what they learn.

Learning Outcomes:

- Increased awareness and appreciation of diverse cultures.
- Direct engagement that promotes understanding and breaks stereotypes.

2. Culture Clash Simulation

Type: Simulation and Role-Playing Game

Objective:

- To explore challenges and opportunities in intercultural interactions.
- To develop problem-solving and communication skills.

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Scenario descriptions representing different cultural scenarios.
- Debriefing questions for reflection.

Instructions:

1. Assign participants roles from different cultures.
2. Present scenarios that involve cultural clashes or misunderstandings.
3. Participants work together to find solutions.

Learning Outcomes:

- Improved problem-solving skills in cross-cultural contexts.
- Deeper understanding of challenges in intercultural communication.

3. Cultural Storytelling Circle

Type: Workshop and Discussion

Objective:

- To encourage participants to share personal cultural stories.
- To build empathy and understanding through storytelling.

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Comfortable seating arrangement in a circle.
- Guiding questions for storytelling.

Instructions:

- Participants take turns sharing personal stories related to their culture.
- Encourage active listening and ask follow-up questions.
- Facilitate a group discussion on the commonalities and unique aspects of each story.

Learning Outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of personal cultural experiences.
- Fostering empathy and connection through shared narratives.

4. Stereotype Busting Workshop

Type: Workshop and Discussion

Objective:

- To identify and challenge stereotypes.
- To promote critical thinking about preconceived notions.

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Flip chart or whiteboard.
- Marker pens.
- List of common stereotypes.

Instructions:

1. Begin with a discussion on what stereotypes are and their impact.
2. List common stereotypes on the flip chart.
3. Break into small groups to discuss and challenge these stereotypes.

Learning Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of stereotypes.
- Development of critical thinking skills.

5. Cooking Across Cultures

Type: Practical Workshop

Objective:

- To foster collaboration through a shared activity.
- To promote understanding of diverse cuisines and eating habits.

Duration: 2 hours

Materials and Resources:

- Ingredients for a variety of cultural dishes.
- Cooking utensils and facilities.

Instructions:

- Divide participants into small groups.
- Assign each group a cultural dish to prepare.
- After cooking, groups share their dishes, discussing the cultural significance.

Learning Outcomes:

- Collaboration and teamwork.
- Appreciation for the diversity of food cultures.

6. World Café: Cultural Perspectives

Type: Discussion and Group Activity

Objective:

- To facilitate structured conversations on cultural topics.
- To create an open space for sharing perspectives.

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Tables, chairs, and paper for note-taking.
- Guiding questions for each table.

Instructions:

1. Set up multiple tables, each with a different cultural topic.
2. Participants rotate through the tables, contributing to discussions.
3. Summarize key insights and reflections in a group debrief.

Learning Outcomes:

- Diverse perspectives on cultural topics.
- Improved communication and dialogue skills.

7. Language Exchange Workshop

Type: Interactive Workshop

Objective:

- To promote language learning and cultural exchange.
- To break down language-related stereotypes.

Duration: 60 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Language learning materials.
- Small-group conversation prompts.

Instructions:

- Participants pair up with someone who speaks a different language.
- Encourage language exchange and cultural discussions.
- Rotate pairs to allow participants to interact with multiple languages.

Learning Outcomes:

- Language learning and appreciation.
- Breaking down language-related stereotypes.

8. Community Building Through Art

Type: Creative Workshop

Objective:

- To express cultural identity through art.
- To create a collaborative art piece that represents diversity.

Duration: 2 hours

Materials and Resources:

- Art supplies (canvas, paints, brushes, etc.).
- Collaborative art project idea.

Instructions:

1. Discuss the concept of cultural identity.
2. Participants create individual art pieces reflecting their cultural identity.
3. Combine individual pieces into a collaborative mural or exhibit.

Learning Outcomes:

- Expression of cultural identity through art.
- Teamwork and collaboration in creating a unified piece.

9. Cross-Cultural Team Building Games

Type: Outdoor or Indoor Games

Objective:

- To enhance teamwork and cooperation.
- To break down cultural barriers through fun activities.

Duration: Varies (multiple short activities)

Materials and Resources:

- Team-building game instructions.
- Space for physical activities.

Instructions:

- Organize a series of team-building games that require collaboration.
- Mix up the teams to encourage interaction between participants from different cultures.
- Debrief after each activity to discuss lessons learned.

Learning Outcomes:

- Improved teamwork and communication skills.
- Breaking down cultural barriers through shared experiences.

10. Global Citizenship Workshop

Type: Workshop and Discussion

Objective:

- To explore the concept of global citizenship.
- To foster a sense of shared responsibility for a diverse world.

Duration: 90 minutes

Materials and Resources:

- Flip chart or whiteboard.
- Markers.
- Guiding questions on global citizenship.

Instructions:

1. Define and discuss the concept of global citizenship.
2. Engage participants in a dialogue on their roles as global citizens.
3. Encourage reflection on the interconnectedness of diverse cultures.

Learning Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of global citizenship.
- Understanding the collective responsibility for a diverse and interconnected



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